

Shelby County Office of Preparedness eNews

December 2016 Issue



Dale Lane, Director

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Director Lane's Message: Gatlinburg is Mountain Tough!



The ravaged Great Smoky Mountain community is recovering from deadly wildfires described by Gatlinburg Fire Chief Greg Miller as "a fire for the history books...like something we have never seen." On November 23 a fire on 1.5 acres at Chimney Tops, Tennessee was almost contained. As a strategy, the fire team identified a 410 acre containment area, to allow the fire to be fought safely. November 27, the National Weather Service predicted 40 mph wind gusts. However, the winds were stronger than predicted - 87 mph - and hampered the team's efforts, burning up to 30 acres. By November 28, with extremely dry, windy conditions, burning embers blew ½ to 4.5 miles away, creating "spot fires." Extreme smoke further impeded the team from accurately tracking the fire. Door-to-door evacuations began in Minot Park and a mutual aid call out resulted in 200 firefighters from multiple agencies responding to the Gatlinburg Fire Department. Fires encroached on Gatlinburg as trees fell and power lines were knocked down. Mandatory evacuations of Minot Park and Gatlinburg started as infrastructure failure of downed cellphone towers blocked emergency messaging to citizens. However, the news media shared the evacuation orders through social media sites resulting in 14,000 citizens being safely evacuated. However, some did not escape. 14 died and 175 were injured. The American Red Cross set up shelters for evacuees. 2,460 buildings were destroyed, 20,000 acres scorched, and damages may reach \$500 million. Governor Bill Haslam called the event, "an unprecedented storm" and requested a presidential disaster declaration. President Obama granted federal disaster assistance for recovery efforts. Investigators arrested two juveniles and charged with aggravated arson.

Shelby County Office of Preparedness Director Dale Lane said, "We want our Gatlinburg neighbors to know we support their recovery and we are praying for them. We thank the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and our Shelby County citizens who rushed to Gatlinburg to aid firefighters and assist shelter workers (TN Task Force 1 canine handlers and volunteers) during this tragedy."



The Great Smoky Mountain National Park is the most visited national park in the United States and its recovery could take years. Sevier County launched a recovery website at www.mountaintough.org if you are interested in donating money, time, items, or housing for the victims. The American Red Cross is accepting donations at www.redcross.org. The TEMA EOC remains at a Level 3, State of Emergency, to coordinate the recovery.

Caption: Wildfires ravaged the Great Smokey Mountains near Gatlinburg on November 28, 2016

Tactical Stocking Stuffers!



For last minute holiday gifts, nothing says “I care” like preparedness gifts. Most are under \$15. The Shelby County Office of Preparedness can help with your holiday shopping list. See below:

- ✓ Hand crank or solar flashlight, lantern, headlamp, glow sticks
- ✓ Water purification tablets, personal water filter
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ Holiday Duct tape
- ✓ NOAA all-hazards battery-powered radio with tone alert
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Mylar emergency blanket and emergency poncho
- ✓ Flash drives (to hold copies of photos and personal documents)
- ✓ Magnesium fire starter
- ✓ Can opener, mess kit
- ✓ 5 gallon paint bucket and toilet lid
- ✓ Hand and foot warmers
- ✓ Waterproof matches and container
- ✓ Jerky, MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat)
- ✓ Signal mirror
- ✓ Solar recharging kit
- ✓ **Personal Protective Equipment:** helmet, goggles, reflective vest, work gloves, N95 face masks
- ✓ **Tools:** pocket knife, utility shut off tool, hatchet, shovel, scissors, ice scraper



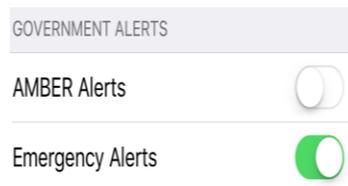
Winter Safe Dressing



The Shelby County Office of Preparedness reminds citizens to dress for the weather. Check the forecast before deciding your wardrobe. As the temperatures drop, add more layers of clothing. Remember, when it is cold to extreme cold; always cover your head, hands and feet. Assist children, seniors, and those with mental or medical challenges, to protect themselves during these winter months. For more information, please visit www.weather.gov.

Emergency Alerts

When disaster strikes, how do you know what is happening and what to do next? Do you evacuate or shelter-in-place? First, citizens are encouraged to stay informed about possible hazards and threats in Shelby County through local media. Secondly, when an unexpected event occurs, citizens can receive alerts on their smart phones. If you don't know if your smart phone is capable to receive notifications, go under **"settings, government alerts, and notifications."** If you can't find this information, please check with your phone carrier.



The Emergency Alert System or EAS is the national public warning system allowing the President to address the public about a national emergency through radio, TV, cable TV, wireless carriers, satellite digital audio radio services, and direct satellites. It can be used by state and local authorities to delivery emergency information such as AMBER alerts and weather warnings.



Wireless emergency alerts or WEA are emergency messages sent to mobile devices by public safety agencies such as FEMA, the FCC, the National Weather Service, and the Department of Homeland Security. It will look like a text message with no more than 90 characters. You may hear a special tone and vibration to repeat twice. If you receive a WEA, follow the instructions.



Shelby County is part of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System or IPAWS. This system uses the Common Alerting Protocol or CAP to enable public officials, such as the Office of Preparedness, to quickly warn citizens of a threat through radio, TV, internet, and wireless devices. Shelby County will work in partnership with other local agencies to ensure the emergency notification is delivered.



The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) offers the ReadyTN (free) mobile app that pushes out notifications for Shelby County. The app also includes TDOT traffic information, open shelters, weather warnings, and is also a great resource for preparedness information for the most common hazards that may occur here.

Outreach:

Retired Women's Ministry

The Shelby County Office of Preparedness was delighted to visit with the "Retired Women's Ministry" on November 14 during their monthly meeting at Greater White Stone Missionary Baptist Church at 917 Wellington. The group learned what to do before, during, and after the most common hazards in Shelby County. All were given FEMA preparedness literature and a Shelby County HELP/ OK sign.

Caption: Retired Women's Ministry at Greater White Stone Missionary Baptist



Plan to Evacuate



The recent Gatlinburg wildfires and the Murfreesboro hazardous materials leak events required citizens to evacuate with little warning - many leaving abruptly with only the clothes on their back in order to save their own lives.

If you have to suddenly leave home or work during an unexpected event, would you be ready? The amount of time you have to make decisions about what to take and what to leave behind depends on the present danger and threat. The Shelby County Office of Preparedness suggests making an **evacuation plan** with your family before you need to evacuate. Here are some preplanning suggestions:

- Listen to officials for updated information and instructions.
- Plan where to meet your family, inside and outside, of your neighborhood.
- Keep a tank full of gas.
- Learn alternate routes out of your neighborhood ahead of time
- Only follow official recommended routes and don't take short cuts
- Be alert for road hazards (flooding, downed power lines)
- Make a plan to leave with and without a vehicle (public transportation, family, friends)
- Have a portable disaster kit to include: bottled water, nonperishable food, cell phone and charger, NOAA weather radio, ID, medications, glasses, infant items, senior items, pet items, important documents, cash, first aid kit, blankets, clothing, fire extinguisher, waterproof matches, portable toilet, hygiene items, mess kit, pen and paper, whistle, maps.
- Take your pets with you. Only service animals are allowed in public shelters. Make a list of pet-friendly hotels ahead of time.
- Call or email your out-of-state contact to check in.
- Secure your home by locking windows and doors. Unplug appliances.
- Leave a note telling others where you have gone.
- Be a buddy and check to see if neighbors need a ride.

Let FEMA Remind You



Staying prepared has never been easier with the FEMA “reminders.”

Simply upload the free FEMA mobile app at www.fema.gov. Go to Prepare, then Reminders, and activate the reminders for such preparedness tasks as “testing smoke alarms, updating your emergency kit, practicing your fire escape plan, or replacing smoke alarm batteries.”

If you are too busy when the reminder comes up, you can ask the app to “remind me in 7 days.” You can reset the reminders or disable them at any time.

Thanks, FEMA!

National Weather Service Winter Workshop



On December 1, Gary Woodall, National Weather Service (NWS) Warning Coordinator, graciously welcomed emergency officials from Shelby and surrounding counties to the “2016 NWS Winter Weather Partners Workshop” at Agricenter International. Jim Branda, Meteorologist, gave insight to past winter weather events that included tornadoes, flooding, snow, ice, and dense fog. He said that half of every winter watch given is upgraded to a warning after they assess the threat to life and property. Zach Maye, Climate Program Lead, presented information on the MidSouth’s weather outlook for 2016 – 2017. The NWS predicts the drought outlook will improve in December and the MidSouth will likely experience above normal temperatures from December until February. However, Maye reminded all that La Nina may enhance our area for intermittent severe weather. Mike Johnson, Lead Forecaster, spoke about mobile decision support for their emergency partners. The audience members then separated into breakout session groups to take part in the “Winter Exercises.” SCOP Director Dale Lane and staff members were excited to attend this event.

Caption: Mike Johnson, NWS Lead Forecaster, discussed the mobile decision support systems, the iNWS, at the workshop.

Safe Home Heating

With temperatures dropping, the Shelby County Office of Preparedness reminds citizens to make a plan to heat your home safely. Here are some home heating safety tips from the U.S. Fire Administration to share:

- Be sure heaters, furnaces, and fireplaces are in good working order. Have a professional inspect them.
- Don’t use excessive paper to build a fire in a fireplace. Use glass or metal screens in front of fireplaces.
- Before going to sleep, ensure your fire is out.
- If synthetic logs are used in a fireplace, follow the directions for the manufacturer
- Ensure wood stoves are laboratory tested.
- If you use a fuel burning heater, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never fill the heater while it is in operation.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Don’t use a range or oven to supplement your heat.
- If you use a space electric heater, don’t overload the circuit.
- Avoid using space heaters in bathrooms or other areas with water.
- Make sure you have proper ventilation to prevent buildup of carbon monoxide.
- Keep all flammable objects at least 3 feet from any heating device.



Have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home and one outside of each sleeping area. Have an escape plan and practice the plan. Make sure all windows and doors can open easily in case of a fire. Call 911 when you suspect a fire. Get out and stay out until the Fire Department arrives.

SCOP Monitored St. Jude Marathon

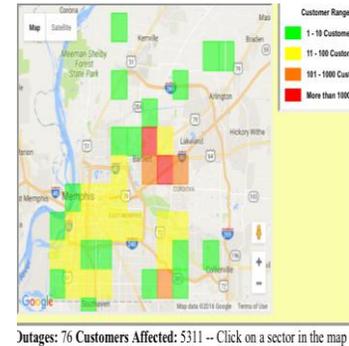
The Shelby County Office of Preparedness (SCOP) partially activated the Emergency Operations Center and was on site to monitor the safety of citizens who participated in the St. Jude Marathon fund raiser on December 3. Thousands of runners filled the streets of downtown Memphis for several hours to support the children and families of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Any time there is a large public event, the SCOP will be working in partnership with other emergency officials to ensure the public stays safe against terrorism.

Caption: St. Jude runners and walkers on December 3. Photo by Mike Brazzell, SCOP Preparedness Officer.

Significant Weather / Power Outages



Captions: Left: November 28 storm damage shows a downed tree on Front Street.

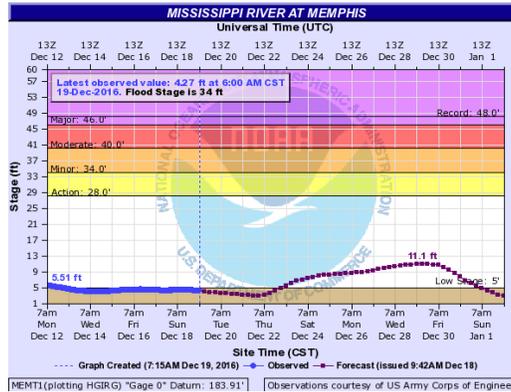
Center: December 18 icicles protrude from a downspout in North Memphis. **Right:** MLGW outage map December 18.

National Weather Service: The probability for widespread hazards is LOW. Please visit www.weather.gov for more information.

Severe Weather / Power Outages:

- **November 15, 22:** Elevated fire danger.
- **November 18:** Severe weather statement. Severe Thunderstorm Warning. Trees reported down. 30,354 customers without power.
- **November 28:** Special weather statement. Winds gusting at 50 mph. Wind Advisory. 10,696 customers without power.
- **December 18:** Special weather statement. Winter weather advisory. Tornado watch. Starry Night opening delayed. Subfreezing temperatures. Trees and power lines reported down. 5,311 customers without power.

Mississippi River at Memphis



Captions: **Left:** Mississippi River at Memphis looking toward Arkansas sandbars from Mississippi River Greenbelt Park on December 18, 2016. **Right:** River level graph from the National Weather Service.

The Mississippi River at Memphis measured 4.27feet on December 19, according to the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service. For more river level information, please visit <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=meg>.

Terrorism / Active Shooter Awareness



“Our citizens are at greater risk during this holiday season,” said Dale Lane, Shelby County Office of Preparedness Director. “Stay vigilant; always be aware of your surroundings. Be sure to have an escape plan and note where exits are located. And practice the, “Run, Hide, Fight,” survival tactic.” Shelby County Office of Preparedness continues to offer active shooter awareness training. Over 5,200 have attended the class to date. To schedule an active shooter class, please visit www.staysafeshelby.us. To view the “Run, Hide, Fight - Surviving an Active Shooter Event” video, please visit <https://youtu.be/5VcSweJU2D0>.

Sandy Hook 4 year anniversary

Newtown, Connecticut sadly marked the fourth anniversary of the horrific Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting on December 14. What has been called the “third deadliest mass shooting in the United States,” took the lives of 20 children and 6 school staff members by a heavily armed gunman, Adam Lanza, before killing himself. On December 14, 2016, flags flew at half-staff, prayer services were held, and Newtown employees observed 15 minutes of silence, between 9:30 and 9:45 a.m., the time the shootings occurred four years ago. As it recovers, Sand Hook has chosen a new slogan, “We Are Sandy Hook, We Choose Love.”



Amateur Radio: Check in! SCOPERNET on Mondays, 6:00 p.m., 147.09 repeater, tone 107.2

Training / Exercises:

Visit www.staysafeshelby.us to register for free classes. Some classes have pre-requisites.

- **ICS 300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents:** Jan. 5 – 6. 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- **Amateur “Ham” Technician Radio Class.** Jan. 16 – Feb. 27, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- **MGT 404 Sports - Special Events Incident Management.** Jan. 24–25, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation Status:

- The **Shelby County Office of Preparedness (SCOP)** is at **Level 5**, Normal Operations.
- The **Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)** remains at **Level 3**, Declaration of State Emergency, since November 10, due to Sevier County’s wildfires.

Flag Status: Full staff.

Shelby County Office of Preparedness:

- **Visit us:** www.staysafeshelby.us
- **Follow us!** SCOP@SCOP_HLS_EMA
- **Like us!** <https://www.facebook.com/StaySafeShelby/>
- **Storm Shelter Registry:** Contact Kimberlyn Boulter at kimberlyn.boulter@shelbycountyttn.gov
- **Volunteer!**
 - **Reserve Program:** Contact Shelby Logan at Shelby.logan@shelbycountyttn.gov.
 - **Shelby Cares:** Contact Terry Donald at terry.donald@shelbycountyttn.gov.

Preparedness Resources:

- American Red Cross (ARC): www.redcross.org
- Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC): www.cusec.org
- Department Homeland Security (DHS): www.dhs.gov
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): www.fema.gov
- Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW): www.mlgw.com
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP): www.floodsmart.gov
- National Weather Service (NWS): www.weather.gov
- ReadyTN Mobile App: www.tnema.org
- Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA): www.tnema.org
- Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT): <https://smartway.tn.gov>
- United States Fire Administration (USFA): www.usfa.fema.gov
- University of Memphis Center for Earthquake Research and Information (CERI): www.ceri.memphis.edu



Emergency: call 911