



October 2015 Issue

Office of Preparedness Hosts AuxComm Exercise



Photo Captions: Left: Setting up antennas, Middle: Shelby County Mobile Emergency Operations Center, Right: Receiving incoming email messages from the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

On October 2 and 3, the Shelby County Office of Preparedness was the primary site for an AuxComm exercise to test auxiliary communications during a catastrophic disaster. The exercises supposes that a 6.5 magnitude earthquake strikes along the New Madrid Seismic Zone killing 3,000, injuring 35,500, with thousands displaced needing short term shelter. Communications were affected, bridges and roadways were impassible, HAZMAT incidents occurred, and shortages of essential supplies, such as food, water, and fuel, were reported.

Howard “Jelly” Thompson, drill incident commander, led a team of ham radio volunteers through a two-day exercise passing messages from EOC to EOC, county to county, EOC to region, and region to region via ham radio and Winlink radio email. Message content included debris conditions, damage assessments, and fatality counts. The Shelby County Office of Preparedness, American Red Cross, FedEx, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Germantown Fire, Delta Amateur Club, Neshoba Club, ARES Club, MARA Club, Fayette County ARES Club, AF MARS, and ham radio operators from Tipton County set up radio stations and strung rope across the campus into tree limbs and atop emergency vehicles for their antennas. At the conclusion of the drill, participants met in the Emergency Operations Center for a debriefing. “It’s all a learning experience,” Thompson said. “The purpose of this drill is to find out what works.” All agreed enthusiastically to hold future drills to continue building relationships for crisis communications.



Photo Captions: Left: Jelly Thompson, Incident Commander, passes messages, Middle: Radio operators send messages from the Germantown Mobile Command, Right: FedEx employees stringing rope



Hard to believe it is fall when Shelby County continues to enjoy summer-like temperatures. On October 15 a new record was set with high of 93 degrees, according to the National Weather Service. But warm temperatures won't last. Now is the time to prepare for fall weather. The National Weather Service's "Weather Ready Nation" recommends these steps to get ready:

1. Check the forecast at www.weather.gov every day as you venture out. Dress appropriately. Postpone trips or activities as needed if inclement weather is predicted.
2. Learn about fall weather hazards (severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, flooding, strong winds, freezing temperatures, ice, and early snow) and how to prepare for them.
3. Update your disaster kits for home, work, and auto. Ensure you and your pets are prepared to survive a sheltering-in-place or evacuation event. Supplies should sustain you for at least 7 to 10 days and nights.
4. Make a family communications plan. Have an out-of- state contact everyone can call to check in with if you get separated. Designate two meeting places: one right outside the home and one further out in the community. Program emergency phone numbers in cell phones.
5. Be a "Force of Nature" by becoming a buddy to those who may need extra assistance during a disaster. They include: our seniors, citizens with health and mobility challenges, those who are indigent, those who live alone, single parents, and those without transportation.

To find out more about fall preparedness, please visit www.nw.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/fall_safety.html. Follow the chat at #FallSafety.

Volunteer with the Office of Preparedness!

The Shelby County Office of Preparedness is recruiting Reserves. These volunteers support the staff by attending community events to hand out preparedness literature, teach the Community Emergency Response Team training, offer emergency communication as amateur "ham" radio operators, and may be called in to assist during an activation of the Emergency Operations Center. Candidates must be 18 years of age, a citizen of Shelby County, and have reliable transportation. After a 6-month probation period, recruits are promoted to a full Reserve.

To apply, please visit www.staysafeshelby.us to fill out an application.

Hazardous Dry Conditions



Photo Captions: Left: Smoke on I-240, Right: Smoke from the fire on Macon Road

On October 13, a fire ignited at Jones Mulch and Wood Recycling Plant in Northeast Memphis bellowing black, thick smoke into the air, and reigniting October 16. It did not pose a threat to businesses, but the smoke created a health hazard. The Shelby County Health Department issued a “Code Red” and then a “Code Orange” alert. The elderly and those with respiratory problems, such as asthma or allergies, were urged to stay inside. On October 15, the Shelby County Fire Marshall issued a “burn ban” after a long period of low humidity and little rain. The ban is on all open burning in the response areas of unincorporated Shelby County.

The National Weather Service reports that drought conditions linger as of October 22. Shelby County has experienced abnormally dry conditions for 90 days. Precipitation is 2 to 6 inches below average. The outlook for the next 10 days is for “above normal totals of precipitation.”

Community Outreach



Left: A youngster at the Holy City Expo shows off his Sesame Street preparedness book, **Right:** A visitor picks up HELP / OK signs

On October 10, the Shelby County Office of Preparedness was excited to meet the public and hand out preparedness literature at the Eighth Annual Holy City Health and Wellness Expo at 3174 James Road. Over 200 citizens participated in this fun community event.

If you would like the Shelby County Office of Preparedness to provide a speaker or to attend your community event to hand out preparedness brochures, please visit www.staysafeshelby.us and fill out the “request a speaker” form or call 901.222.6700.

Disaster Competition UPDATE

Now in Phase 2 of the competition, Shelby County is one of forty seeking part of a \$1 billion federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for projects such as making a floodway in Millington and buying out and relocating homeowners in flood-prone areas. Public hearings held on October 1, 8, and 12 allowed citizens to provide input on how the money would be used to help our county prepare for disasters, such as major flooding. "Greenprint for Resilience, Phase 2" draft can be read at www.resilientshelby.com.

Inclement Weather and Outages

National Weather Service (NWS) in Memphis Reported:

- October 14: Elevated Fire Danger (due to low humidity and dry vegetation)
- October 17: Frost Advisory

Memphis Light, Gas and Water Reported:

- October 9: 2,700 accounts were without power due to grass fire in Cordova.

Survive Blackouts



A power outage can occur anywhere, anytime. Are you prepared? Citizens who survived the epic Super Storm Sandy shared these tips with FEMA to prepare you for an unexpected outage:

1. Purchase a mobile power converter for your car cigarette lighter. It will allow you to run a small computer or radio.
2. Fill up your gas tank and other portable fuel tanks.
3. Stock bottled water (one gallon per person per day). Fill up bathtubs and sinks with water.
4. Fill up propane tanks for portable grills for cooking.
5. Have extra cash on hand in case the ATMs are not working.
6. Fill Ziploc bags with water and freeze them. A block of ice may last longer than ice cubes.
7. Have battery-powered CO2 and smoke detectors for every floor and in your basement.
8. Have a NOAA all-hazards radio with battery back-up and tone alert.
9. Have your cell phone charged. Keep a cell phone battery pack and a car charger.
10. Have a plan and a back-up plan for each hazard and threat that may occur in your region.
11. Fill out a FEMA wallet emergency card for each family member for good communication.

Please view the FEMA "10 Tips to Survive a Blackout" video at: <https://youtu.be/4eH7VbMXir4>.

Mississippi River at Memphis

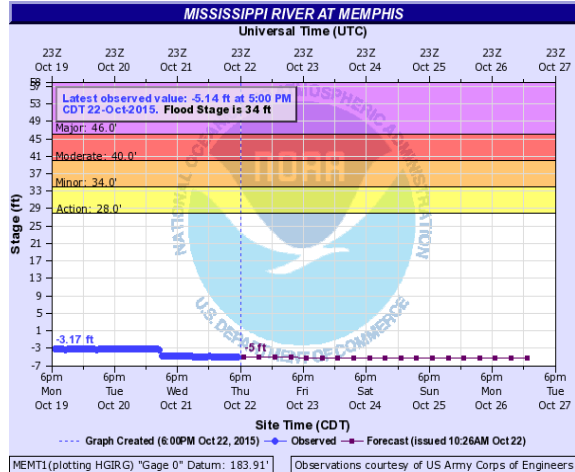


Photo Caption: Left: Tug boats on the Mississippi River at Memphis looking toward Arkansas' sandy shore. Right: Mississippi River at Memphis Hydrograph for October 22, 2015

On October 22, 2015, the Mississippi River at Memphis level was minus 5.14 feet according to the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service. Minor flood stage is 34 feet and major flood stage is 46 feet. To obtain the next river statement, visit www.weather.gov.

Emergency Operations Center Activation Levels



As of October 22, 2015, the Shelby County Emergency Operations Center and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Emergency Operations Center are at Level 5: Normal Operations.

Ham Check In!

All licensed amateur "ham" radio operators are welcome to check-in to Shelby County Office of Preparedness Emergency Reserve Net (SCOPERNET), Mondays, 6:00 p.m., on 147.09 repeater, tone 107.2. Ned Savage is net control. The net is activated during weather warnings.

Preparedness Training

FEMA Offers “Distance Learning”

FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers free on-line, self-paced courses for citizens who have emergency management responsibilities and the general public interested in public safety. EMI, FEMA’s flagship training institution, supports the National Incident Management System, the National Response Framework, the National Disaster Recovery Framework, and the National Preparedness Goal by providing training to improve knowledge and skills of citizens. Students must register to obtain a FEMA student identification number before starting a course. Certificates are emailed in 1 - 2 days after successful completion of a course. To view EMI Independent Study (IS) courses, visit: [www: training.fema.gov/emi.aspx](http://www.training.fema.gov/emi.aspx).

Ham Radio Tech (beginner) Class: Mondays, Nov. 9 – Dec. 14, 6:15 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., FREE! Manual is \$25. Test is \$15. Location: EMHC Ambulance Co., 6972 Appling Farms Pkwy, Memphis, TN To register, contact Joe Lowenthal @ wa4ovo@gmail.com

Visit www.staysafeshelby.us to register for FREE classes:

- Response to Railcar Incidents, November 11, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- WebEOC Refresher Training, December 2, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Preparedness Resources

Shelby County Office of Preparedness: www.staysafeshelby.us, 901.222.6700

- Citizen Corps: citizencorps@shelbycountyttn.gov
- Community Emergency Response Team training: eugene.jones@shelbycountyttn.gov
- Shelby Cares Faith-Based Sheltering Initiative: terry.donald@shelbycountyttn.gov
- Storm Shelter Registry: kimberlyn.bouler@shelbycountyttn.gov

Shelby County: www.shelbycountyttn.gov

Shelby County Medical Reserve Corps: www.shelbycountymrc.org.

Shelby County Public Health Emergency Preparedness: www.schdresponse.com

- **American Red Cross:** www.redcross.org
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):** www.fema.gov
- **Memphis Light, Gas and Water:** www.mlqw.com, www.mlqw.com/residential/outagemap.
Emergency / Outages: 901.544.6500, Downed Power Lines: 901.528.4465
- **National Weather Service (NWS):** www.weather.gov/memphis, 901.544.0399
- **Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA):** www.tnema.gov
- **Tennessee Department of Transportation:** www.tn.gov/tdot
- **EMERGENCY: Call 911**