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## KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

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701 Ball Avenue, N.E. • Grand Rapids • Michigan • 49503



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Emergency Management Division Reminds Residents to Be Prepared! September is National Preparedness Month**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – What would you do in an emergency? Who would you contact? These are just two questions that families should discuss before disaster strikes. The Kent County Emergency Management Division is observing the tenth annual National Preparedness Month this September.

“One of our major functions is to educate the public about how to prepare for emergencies,” said Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator for Kent County. “Sometimes, we get only a few seconds to make life-or-death decisions. How we prepare before natural disasters, biological or chemical threats, or other incidents can often make a difference in the ultimate outcome. We can’t stop the weather; however, we can have a plan on responding to the conditions of the event.”

Emergency preparedness topics you should consider include:

- Home and family preparedness, including pets, older Americans, and individuals with disabilities and special needs, and *Preparación en Español*
- Back-to-school preparedness
- Business preparedness

Before a disaster, family and friends should arrange a meeting place, in case you're not together during an emergency. Discuss how you'll contact each other as well as what to do in a variety of situations. Build a basic emergency kit, which should include three-to- fourteen days of water and non-perishable food, a first aid kit, an all-weather radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, a one week supply of medications and personal hygiene items. A good way to prepare is to consider camping at a rustic campground where there is no electricity. You need to address basic human needs, such as:

How would you prepare food?

Do you have a manual can opener?

How do you stay warm?

Do you have copies of vital records (insurance policies, medical records, business and financial records)?

Also remember to check on our special needs populations (elderly, non-ambulatory) during times of emergencies. The Kent County Emergency Management office offers training free of charge through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). This training prepares individuals to help themselves, their families, and the community in general.

“We learned that good planning and creating partnerships helped during the spring 2013 flooding in Kent County,” said Stewart. “The collaborative efforts of emergency responders, community leaders and various service organizations helped hundreds of residents and businesses.”

**Families can learn more about preparedness Saturday, September 14, 2013, at the PREPARE FAIR! The fair runs from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. on the north end of Riverside Park, 2001 Monroe NW, in Grand Rapids. First Responders, Search and Rescue teams, and Emergency Response equipment/vehicles will be on hand for the family to check out. Radio Disney will also be there providing fun activities for the kids!**

Websites for more information on preparedness:

[www.getReadyKent.com](http://www.getReadyKent.com)

[www.AccessKent.com/GETREADY](http://www.AccessKent.com/GETREADY)

[www.AccessKent.com/emergencymanagement](http://www.AccessKent.com/emergencymanagement)

[www.BeMittenReady.com](http://www.BeMittenReady.com)

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

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