

# Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security

## 2006 Edition of Electronic News

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*Jefferson County Commission's Office of Homeland Security operates Citizen Corps, Project Impact, CERT, the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program and has Committees on Risk Assessment and Mitigation Planning, People with Special Needs, Animals in Disaster, Counter Terrorism Planning, Public Awareness and Education, and Partnership Development. Our committees are open to all who are interested and willing to serve on them, with the exception of the Counter Terrorism Committee, which is limited to Law Enforcement, Healthcare Providers, and the Emergency Responder Community. Any interested Business, Group, Government Agency, Faith-based, Civic Organization or Individual can become a JCOHS Partner. Membership is Free.*

### In Memory of Katie Little...

### A Little Lady that Made a BIG Difference!

This issue of the JCOHS newsletter is dedicated to a friend of mine who passed away in November, Kathryn "Katie" Little. Katie was 89 years old, lived in a small town in Tucker County, WV and was loved by all who were touched by her life.

Katie's town was wiped out by a 500-year flood in 1985, as was much of that section of our state. In 1994, her home and her neighbors' homes suffered damages from flooding again and again in 1996. Tired of seeing lives and property ruined and the suffering of her friends and community, Katie made up her mind to have something done about it. She founded "The Concerned Citizens Coalition," a grass-roots organization concerned about their community. They set about raising money to try to have a floodwall built to protect the several hundred homes that were now repetitive loss properties. And Katie, spent hours and hours telephoning everyone that she thought might be able to help. She said that she would leave no stone unturned, and she didn't. She called James Lee Witt, the then-Director of F.E.M.A. in Washington to tell him about her town and her plans. Not only did he take her call, but he took her call seriously. The next year seven communities in the nation were named as Project Impact Communities and received \$1,000,000 to do mitigation projects and public awareness about floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters. Other funds were received from additional sources and the floodwall was built. Other mitigation projects were done, and people in the floodplain portion of the community were given NOAA weather radios so that they would have early warning of future floods.

In 1998, Katie and some other ladies from the Concerned Citizens Coalition, better known as “The Cookie Ladies,” were picked up in a limo and driven to the Project Impact Summit in Washington, DC. Katie received the Project Impact Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award from F.E.M.A. that year. I was the Coordinator for Project Impact in Randolph and Tucker Counties at that time and was at the Summit to see her accept her award. She was truly the pride of her hometown as she took the stage in front of several hundred people and thanked F.E.M.A. and James Lee Witt, as well as, the many people in her community for the work that they had done to make their little town safer.

Katie was truly an inspiration to me as I learned the skills of the work that I was beginning to do. I had always heard that one person could make a difference in the world, but I never believed it until I met Katie. She inspired through her love for her friends, family and community and I feel so lucky to have experienced her friendship.

## **Shepherdstown Fire Department to Host Free Dinner**

Shepherdstown Fire Department will hold a free community Christmas buffet dinner at the fire hall on Route 45 on Sunday, December 3 from noon until 2 p.m. No reservations for the dinner are needed, according to Fire Department member, Denny Barron.

The dinner will be held in conjunction with the local volunteer fire department’s annual Christmas Open House that will take place from noon until 4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served during the open house, and equipment and ambulances will be on display, Barron says.

“There will be a special appearance by Santa,” Barron says, “so bring your cameras to take pictures of Santa holding your child in his lap.”

The fire department is seeking donations of cakes (no other food, please) for the dinner and open house. Barron is also seeking volunteers to help serve the dinner, clean up, and help with open house.

Call 876-9026 to offer your services.

## Breakfast with Santa

The Independent Fire Company is having a “Breakfast with Santa” on Saturday,  
December 2, 2006  
7:00AM to 11:00AM  
Free Breakfast  
Free photo with Santa  
Stop in for a visit before the annual  
Charles Town- Ranson Christmas Parade.  
Donations accepted.

## Favorite Gifts to Give for Disasters and Emergencies

This has become an annual holiday list of my top favorite items to give as gifts to those who need to be prepared for emergencies, but refuse to prepare themselves. You know who I mean in your family or in your neighborhood. Here’s my list for 2006:

1. Leatherman multi-tools. There are so many styles, but my favorite is the Juice XE6 Multi-Tool, Thunder. The cost is approximately \$60 This tool has it ALL! Needlenose pliers, scissors, straight knife, wire cutters, hard-wire cutters, extra-small screwdriver, small screwdriver, med/large screwdriver, Phillips screwdriver, lanyard attachment, opener, corkscrew with assist, saw, awl, serrated knife, cross cut file, diamond file, comes in Storm Gray or Thunder Purple.
2. Portable All-Hazards Radio. Radio gives you severe storm and tornado alerts plus forecasts and warnings. Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology allows you to receive only relevant messages. Set up to six independent S.A.M.E. codes or set for all counties. Digital tuning covers all seven NOAA weather channel. Display shows date, time and temperature. Also features alarm and snooze functions, freeze alert and a water-resistant case with compass and belt clip. Uses three AA batteries. About \$50
3. The Rino 130 GPS Unit includes a compass, barometric altimeter and access to NOAA channels. It also features a detailed basemap of the Americas that displays cities, highways, railways, rivers, lakes and borders. Unit provides sunrise/sunset information, trip timer and trip distance. About \$350
4. Red Cross Felt Dove Ornament. This hand stitched felt dove ornament is a limited edition offering by Virginia artist Maude Hales. Created especially for the American Red Cross, this detailed wonder is a three-dimensional ornament featuring a dove on the front and American Red Cross stitched in felt on the back. \$12.50 Available from [www.redcross.org/store](http://www.redcross.org/store)

5. 6-in-1 Safety Light. Includes a directional compass, cellular phone charger, emergency FM radio, signal flasher, super bright LED Flashlight, and a 130 Decibel Siren. 30 seconds of cranking will yield approximately 1 hour of flashlight power. About \$19 from [www.safetycross.com](http://www.safetycross.com) Also available locally at Wal-Mart.

## New Winter Stormspotters Trained

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, thirty-nine people attended the National Weather Service Winter Stormspotter Class that was held at the Shepherdstown Fire Company. Spotters were trained in winter hazards, winter preparation and safety, winter normals and extremes, what makes winter storms, NWS forecasts and products, and the role of Skywarn and reporting. Those who were trained were: Jenny Barton, Debbie Clingan, Carolyn Crawford, Paul Crumlish, Alex Dommerich, Salle Edwards-Pickett, Doug Evans, Shirley Evans, Sally Fitzgerald, Katrina Fritts, Barbara Gibson, Donnie Gletner, Dale Horensky, Doris Horensky, Yohei Hosokawa, Donald Jones, Tina Jones, Cris Kinsella, Arthur Kriemelmeyer, Alan Levitan, Chad Merrill, Barb Miller, Doug Nichols, Debra Palmer, Johnnie Parkin, Jim Racey, Jill Randlett, Gene Rice, Robert Schnably, Nancy Steele, Diane Viands, Theresa Voellinger, Lynne Wiseman, Allegra Wright, Amber Legowik, Virginia Legowik, Stephen Legowik, Craig Culp and Kelby Culp. James Brotherton of the Sterling Office of the National Weather Service taught the class.

## Winter Safety Tips

The coming winter months hold the possibility of icy roads, downed power lines and snow drifts. All residents need to prepare now for cold-weather emergencies and disasters.

Every family and business should be ready for the unexpected throughout the year. Now is the time for residents to focus on cold weather, power outages and snowstorms.

Simple steps to becoming disaster ready include getting an emergency supply kit, making a communication plan and listening to local instructions.

- An emergency supply kit includes, among other things, essential items to last at least three days such as a battery-powered radio and extra batteries, food and water, flashlights, a first aid kit, blankets and medications.
- Making a communication plan involves discussing the hazards and threats for your area and what your family would do during an actual emergency. As you create your plan, decide on a meeting place if your family cannot return home, designate an out-of-town friend or relative as a point-of-contact and plan for the specific needs of your household, such as an evacuation shelter for pets or transportation for medical equipment.

- Before, during and after a disaster, it is critical that you listen for the most local, up-to-date information from emergency officials. Local media will convey instructions from local, state and federal government partners, such as details about evacuation orders, how to safely stay where you are and when the emergency has passed.

Additional winter tips:

- Plug space heaters directly into wall sockets and keep them at least three feet from other objects. Do not leave them unattended.
- Install a smoke detector in every bedroom and one on every level of your home. Check the batteries monthly and replace them annually.
- Make sure that outdoor pets have adequate shelter, unfrozen water and food.
- Driving is most dangerous when the temperature is at or under 32° F. If the road is wet, ice is likely, especially on bridges, ramps and overpasses.
- Even when roads have been treated with salt and/or sand, drivers should reduce their speed and leave a safe driving distance between themselves and other vehicles on the road.
- Remove dead tree branches. Ice and snow, combined with winter winds, can cause limbs to snap.
- Clean gutters. Snow and ice can build up quickly, especially if your gutters are clogged with debris. When thawing begins, water from melting ice has nowhere to drain and can back up under your roof and eaves, causing water damage to walls and ceilings. Consider buying screens to keep your gutters debris-free.
- Check your homeowners insurance policy to make sure coverage is adequate for the types of winter weather in your area. Learn what is excluded from the policy.

## Winter Driving Tips

From the National Weather Service

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, approximately 70 percent of fatal automobile accidents are ice or snow-related. Another 25 percent of winter deaths can be attributed to people being caught out in a storm.

The National Weather Service reports that many people die when they attempt to leave their vehicle during a winter storm to walk to safety. Instead, stranded drivers should stay with the vehicle, tie a piece of cloth to the car's antenna, and keep the car running while using the heater every 10 minutes out of each hour. People in the vehicle need to keep the interior lights on while the engine is running.

Stranded people can avoid hypothermia by constantly moving their arms and legs. Hypothermia is a serious condition that predominantly affects males and people over the age of 60. Warning signs of detecting severely low body temperature are memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, exhaustion and uncontrollable shivering. People generally suffer from hypothermia after being over-exposed to

extremely cold weather-which is another reason why stranded passengers should remain in their vehicles until help arrives.

Preparing your vehicle:

1. Prepare your vehicle for the winter by getting a complete tune-up in the fall.
2. Check your tire pressure at least once a month to ensure that tires are properly inflated. Identical tires should be used on all four wheels to improve vehicle handling. Ensure that tire treads are 1/16 inch for adequate traction.
3. Have your exhaust system carefully checked for leaks that could send carbon monoxide into your vehicle.
4. Check your radiator and hoses for cracks and leaks. Make sure the radiator cap, water pump and thermostat work properly. Test the strength of the anti-freeze and test the functioning of the heater and defroster.
5. Make sure wipers are in good condition and fill up on winter washer fluid. Carry an extra jug of washer fluid in the vehicle.

Winter Travel Survival Kit

- ❖ Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- ❖ Flashlight and Extra batteries
- ❖ Blankets or sleeping bags
- ❖ Booster cables
- ❖ Fire extinguishers (5 lbs. ABC type)
- ❖ First Aid Kit
- ❖ Bottled Water & Non-perishable High Energy Foods (granola bars, raisins, peanut butter and crackers)
- ❖ Road/Emergency Flares
- ❖ Compass & Road Maps
- ❖ Ice Scraper & Brush
- ❖ Shovel
- ❖ Tire Repair Kit & Pump
- ❖ Extra Clothing (Socks, footwear, hats, coats, gloves)
- ❖ Sack of sand or non-clumping cat litter (for traction)
- ❖ Tow Rope or Chain
- ❖ Matches & Survival Candle in a deep can
- ❖ Cell Phone with Charger or extra battery

## **Carbon Monoxide Facts from Shepherdstown Fire Department**

By Lieutenant R. Michael Smith

It's that time of year when it gets cold and we start to use a variety of ways to heat our homes to keep us warm. There is nothing wrong with staying warm this winter, but, you need to be aware of a colorless, odorless gas that can cause illness and in some sever

cases, death. Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas that comes from burning fossil fuels, such as gasoline, kerosene, methane, propane, oil, coal, and wood. So how does carbon monoxide harm us? Carbon Monoxide replaces the oxygen in the blood and it can cause suffocation in sufficient quantity. Low doses cause symptoms that feel like the flu. As the levels increase in the blood, it can lead to headaches, nausea, dizziness, collapse, coma, and even death. The three main ways that carbon monoxide enters a house are:

1. Automobile emissions
2. Home heating equipment
3. Cooking stoves

So what can you do to protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning? Here are some safety tips to follow:

1. Shut off automobile motor and take keys out of the ignitions as soon as your car is parked in the garage. Make this a safety habit to insure that no carbon monoxide fumes can get into your home. Always warm up the vehicle outside of your house, never inside the garage.
  2. Have your vehicle inspected at least once a year for exhaust leaks.
  3. Have all fuel burning equipment checked each year to make certain combustion is clean and that there are no risks of carbon monoxide leakage. Do it before the start of the heating season.
  4. Be sure heating equipment is located where an adequate supply of fresh air is available for safe combustion.
  5. When in use, be sure to open the flue to make sure the fireplace is safely vented.
  6. Gas fired barbeque grills give off dangerous carbon monoxide. They must never be used inside a house or garage.
  7. When buying new heating or cooking equipment, choose only units that have been independently laboratory tested. Never accept equipment that is damaged. Have a qualified technician install the equipment and be sure all applicable fire safety and building codes are followed.
  8. When buying a new home, have a qualified inspector make sure that all the heating and cooking systems are in safe working order without risk of carbon monoxide leakage.
  9. Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home to alert you to its presence.
- Remember, it's odorless, tasteless and colorless.

Hopefully with these few safety tips, you can have a safe and warm winter. If you have any questions about carbon monoxide or any fire related question, you can check out [ShepherdstownFireDepartment.com](http://ShepherdstownFireDepartment.com) or [RMSmith@svfd.us](mailto:RMSmith@svfd.us)

## Coming Events & Meetings

### December, 2006

5 Steering Committee Meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the meeting room at Hunter House.

13 Regional Pandemic Flu Tabletop Exercise in Hampshire County. For more information, contact Judi Rice at the Jefferson County Health Department. 728-8415

13 Weapons of Mass Destruction/Terrorism Class for CERTS at St. Thomas Lutheran Church from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. To pre-register, call 728-3329 or email to [bmiller@jeffersoncountywv.org](mailto:bmiller@jeffersoncountywv.org)

18 Animals in Disaster Committee Meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Briggs Animal Adoption Center, Route 9 towards Berryville.

20 LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) Meeting at 7:30 a.m. in Billie's Meeting Room in Ranson.

25 Christmas Day-Office is Closed

\* Other Activities may be added. Watch your email for updates!!

\*\* Classes may need to be rescheduled in times of inclement weather or Emergency Operations Center activation. If you have questions about JCOHS activities, call 728-3329.

\*\* If you have activities that you would like to have added to the Calendar of Events, please get the information to the JCOHS Office prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.