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West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

News Release

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SCHOOLS RECEIVE WEATHER RADIOS

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – Public schools throughout West Virginia began receiving weather radios this week in an effort to protect children during weather emergencies. The radios were provided through a joint project between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and national Departments of Education and Homeland Security. Public schools across America will receive NOAA Public Alert Radios this year and private schools will receive them next year.

School principals will receive the radios and the NWS and Citizen Corp volunteers can help program the radios to meet the needs of each school. The radios can be programmed to send out alerts for specific weather concerns such as flash flooding, severe thunderstorms and more. Additionally, the radios can be programmed to alert school officials of conditions in their immediate areas, in neighboring counties or even statewide.

“This is just another example of local, state and federal agencies working across invisible lines in the name of public safety,” said Jimmy Gianato, director, West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. “Weather can often turn deadly before we realize the severity of the situation. These radios are just another means to ensure the necessary information can be shared accordingly.”

In West Virginia, the National Weather Service, Department of Education and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management have been working together to notify counties of the weather radios.

“Our key concern is always providing a safe and healthy environment for students, said Bill Elswick, executive director, West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Facilities. “The weather radios will help minimize the risk to children during any situation.”

The weather radios are connected to a nationwide network of radios that broadcast important weather information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The NWS broadcasts warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information via the radio network. Federal, State and local emergency officials can use the network to send out messages to the public about natural disasters, man-made disasters and even AMBER alerts. For information on programming weather radios go to: www.weather.gov/charlestonwv .

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