

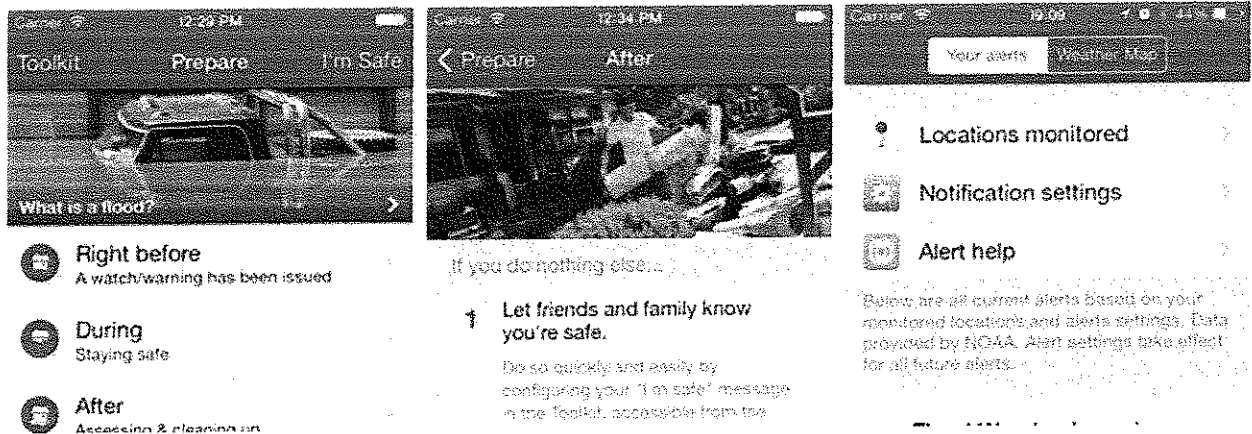
## Social Media and Apps in Emergency Preparedness

By Kathlene Hindman

In our world today there are very few people who do not know what facebook, Twitter and other social media available online. Many people have facebook on their Smartphones so that anytime something important occurs they can take a picture and post it so that all they care about see and know what happens. So what does this have to do with emergency preparedness? The best way to deal with a disaster is to be prepared in case of a disaster. Disasters can be small such as a house fire that only involves one family or as large as the 9/11 attacks of 2001 or Hurricane Katrina. Disasters fit into two categories natural and man-made. In the natural disaster realm there are things like tornadoes, flooding and earthquake. Man-made disasters would include terrorism, train derailment and oil spills. Preparations for disasters depends on where someone lives. In Alaska it does not make sense to have a tornado shelter but it does make sense to secure tall furniture to the wall so that during an earthquake the bookshelf does not fall. In the valley the first is not a likely need while the second would be very important.

In order to understand what can be done to prepare for disasters that may occur in this valley is to look to the internet and Apps that are available. Web sites with information include the following:

- [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) is a website that has information on how to be informed, make a plan, build a kit, get involved, and includes a section for business and kids. The section on kids has games and tools to teach children how to be prepared if a disaster does occur and they are separated from family. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina it took a full six months before the last child was reunited with family members. This website even includes a section on how to get another family member ready for a disaster and that is the family pet.



<http://www.redcross.org/news/article/Red-Cross-Apps-Have-Something-for-Everyone>

- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) is a website for the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross is a very well-known non-governmental organization (NGO) that has been around since 1881. Throughout the years people have seen those red crosses in disaster events. Their mission statement is to "prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors." On the home page you can find information on donating both money and blood as well as training & certification, ways to help, and getting assistance. The website also has a place to find information called Resolve to

Get Prepared for Emergencies in 2015. Following a link that leads to a listing of the apps that are available and include the following: Hurricane app, flood app, tornado app, earthquake app, wildfire app, first aid app all of which are free. There is an app for pet first aid but it has a small cost of \$0.99. All of these are available in itunes as well as google play. All you need to do is to do a search for American Red Cross and all these apps plus many others that pertain to different emergencies. Once you have the app downloaded and open it look in the upper toolbar there is a thumbs up picture. When you connect this with your facebook or twitter page upon a disaster occurring you simply tap the thumbs up icon and facebook will post that you are okay.



- [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) is a website that also has an app that you can get for free from both itunes as well as google play. On this website that has information about how to Plan, Prepare, & Mitigate; Disaster Survivor Assistance; Response & Recovery; Topics & Audiences; Blog, Newsroom, Videos & Photos; About FEMA. If you are a business owner this website has a link to a Continuity of Operations (COOP) that will walk you through the steps to help your business and employees become prepared and recover after a disaster. A common misconception is that FEMA is a government agency that comes in after a disaster to save the day but that is not true. If you go to the website you will see their mission statement "is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capacity to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards." One way they support this mission in our valley is through contributions to our Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

The LEPC is a group of volunteers who meet on the second Thursday of every month at 10am in the Prince William Sound Community College. This meeting is open to everyone who wants to attend. So who is everyone that could be you? Come check it out and see.