News Release

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**FEMA, NOAA To Launch Third National Severe Weather Preparedness Week**

**LINCROFT, N.J.** – The third annual National Severe Weather Preparedness Week, led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, will be held March 2-8, 2014.

This year’s theme is “Be a Force of Nature: Take the Next Step.” The nationwide effort is designed to increase awareness of severe weather and encourage individuals, families, businesses and communities to know their risk, prepare ahead of an event, and be an example to others wherever they may be.

Every year, people are injured or killed due to natural disasters. There were seven weather and climate disasters in the United States in 2013 that had losses of more than $1 billion. Overall, 109 people were killed in these events, which included five severe weather and tornado events, a major flood, and the drought/heat wave in the western United States.

A family emergency plan lays the groundwork for you and your family to protect itself if a disaster strikes without warning. Collect information from FEMA and your local emergency management offices and gather your family members to create your plan. After the plan is in place, you and your family should exchange contact information and make sure that it remains current. Putting together a disaster supply kit also is essential to making sure that your family has the provisions needed for each individual. Some kits may need additional items if there are seniors or infants in the house or those with access and functional needs.

The “Take the Next Step” theme has two focuses. The first is getting people to be proactive and understand their risks so they can be prepared to take the appropriate action before, during and after severe weather events. The second is to improve the way people respond to severe weather threats. NOAA service assessments and social science studies have shown that people are more likely to take preparedness measures and actions for an event if they have observed others take similar actions.

To that end, NOAA suggests that everyone not only be prepared but inspire others to do the same. NOAA’s “Be a Force of Nature” toolkit offers a variety of ways you can help spread the word among your friends and neighbors to always be prepared for severe weather. Visit [ready.gov/severe-weather](http://www.ready.gov/severe-weather) or [noaa.gov/wrn](http://www.noaa.gov/wrn) to learn more about severe weather and to be better prepared.

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For more information on New Jersey’s disaster recovery, visit [fema.gov/SandyNJ](http://fema.gov/SandyNJ), [twitter.com/FEMASandy](http://twitter.com/FEMASandy), [facebook.com/FEMASandy](https://www.facebook.com/FEMASandy) and [fema.gov/blog](http://www.fema.gov/blog).

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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