

Ready Illinois Disaster Preparedness Website

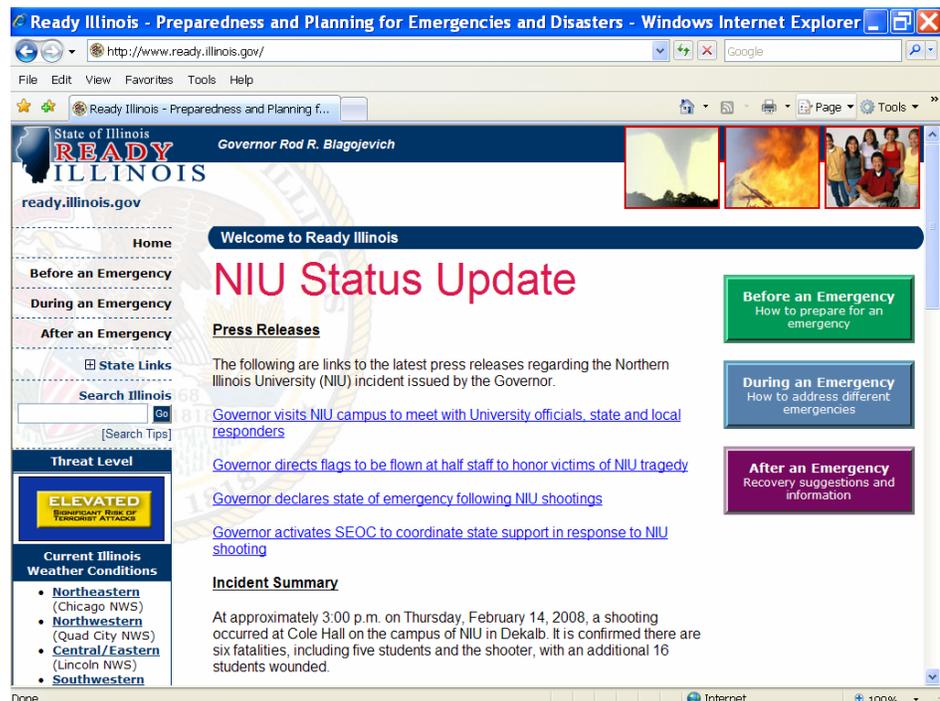
Disaster preparedness information is just a mouse click away with a new state Web site unveiled by Governor Blagojevich's administration during the Illinois Emergency Management Agency's statewide emergency management conference in September 2007. The Ready Illinois Web site (www.Ready.Illinois.gov) offers comprehensive information on steps individuals can take before emergencies happen, what to do once a disaster has occurred, and tips for recovery after the event. In addition, during a large-scale disaster, current information about the situation and details about such things as shelters and road closures can be posted on the site to help people access needed information.

The Ready Illinois Web site's "Before an Emergency" section offers a variety of information on how to prepare for emergencies before they occur, including information on animals and pets, business safety, cyber safety, preparing an emergency kit, guides for family emergency planning and more.

In the "During an Emergency" section, people can check the site for information on how to stay safe, including details about disease outbreaks, earthquakes, fires, hazardous materials, nuclear power plant accidents, evacuations, weather emergencies and other disaster situations.

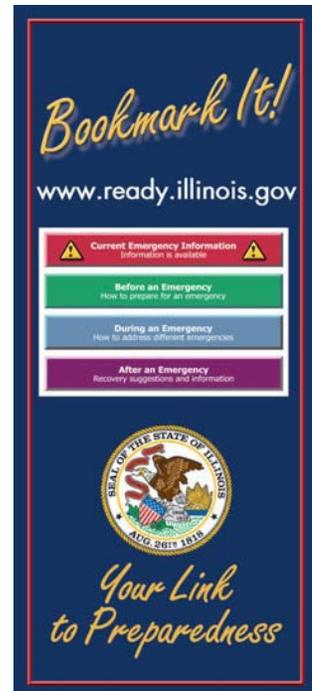
The "After the Emergency" section provides information to help people navigate through the disaster recovery process, including explanations about types of assistance that could be available if the affected area is declared a federal disaster area. The section also contains information about mental health issues following a disaster, including Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

The Ready Illinois Web site also provides the state with a valuable tool for providing up-to-date information to the public during an actual disaster. An additional section, "Current Emergency Information," can be activated to allow state emergency management officials to post status reports and other public information on the situation, including the location of shelters, road closures and contact information for assistance.



Throughout the Web site are links to dozens of state and federal Web sites that contain additional helpful information for emergency preparedness, response and recovery. One such link is to *Illinois Volunteers* (www.ready.illinois.gov/volunteers/), a new program that provides a coordinated means for citizens to assist their communities and the State of Illinois during times of disaster. This program welcomes young people and adults from all parts of the state to assist with response efforts ranging from unskilled to those requiring professional fields of expertise. No prior training is necessary. Illinois Volunteers is designed to complement the volunteer programs of the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Citizen Corps, and other volunteer organizations that regularly participate in disaster response. Illinois Volunteers is a means to pre-identify those citizens not affiliated with an organization but willing and ready to help when the need arises.

Spontaneous volunteers who show up at a disaster site are well meaning but can cause logistical problems, can sap resources needed for victims, and can become victims themselves. By registering on the Ready Illinois Web site as an Illinois Volunteer, citizens' talents can be put to use where and when they are needed. The State Emergency Operations Center will contact volunteers and tell them when, where and to whom they should report during a disaster response.



The database of volunteers registered through the Illinois Volunteers program can be organized by geographic region, skills, willingness to perform specific tasks, and availability. The information can be dispersed to county and local emergency management agencies to assist with

local disaster efforts. All contact information is secure and will be shared with other response organizations only if specifically authorized by the volunteer.

