With many locales across the state already having seen snow on at least one occasion this fall, more than a few Arkansans are wondering how severe this winter may be.

For those charged with managing emergencies, planning for the worst is the key.

Dustin Davis, natural hazards planner, said ADEM officials have addressed the upcoming winter as they have any potentially threatening season.

“We will continue to create standby teams when severe weather threatens the state and will respond to disaster as we have in the past. Other state agencies, such as the Highway Department, are preparing for the wintry weather by hiring more team members and stockpiling supplies.”

Like their colleagues at ADEM, Area Emergency Management Coordinators have begun their winter preparations, too, if a bit earlier than normal. Coordinators each use their ADEM Durango SUV as a mobile office and take care to prepare them for winter weather response by checking the tires, windshield wipers and batteries and packing winter weather gear.

Teresa Smith, Southwest Area Coordinator, said she takes along a large bucket of kitty litter to give her a bit of traction on slick roads and Anthony Coy, Northeast Area Coordinator, makes sure to have a few blankets tucked into the truck. The worst-case scenario for them is being stranded in their vehicle during cold-weather, so most of their preparation is designed to avoid or best manage that risk. They also have multiple ways of contacting someone for help -- cell phone, AWIN

See WINTER on page 2
radio, local VHF radios and satellite phones.

“If bad weather is forecasted I make sure I do two things; fill my truck up with gas and get cash from the ATM,” Smith said. “I have several ways to contact someone for assistance in my truck so things would have to be pretty bad before I couldn’t contact someone for help.”

Davis noted that preparing for winter weather hazards is simple but important.

“As with any disaster preparation, be sure to have a go-kit available to you. This should include supplies to sustain life for at least three days, extra clothing and, in winter weather, items to keep warm such as blankets, coats, gloves, hats,” he said.

Traveling on ice-covered roads can be extremely hazardous, Coy noted.

“I am grateful that we do have four wheel drive trucks that can assist should it be needed. Even though I have the ability to drive during the inclement weather, I still only do it when absolutely necessary. Having an accident certainly doesn’t help anyone or our agency.”

Davis offered several driving tips.

“What are woolly worms predicting?”

Although official long-range weather forecasts vary in their accuracy, more than a few organizations issue them.

A preponderance of forecasts indicate that Arkansas may be in for a colder and icier than normal winter season.

See long-range winter weather forecasts for the state here, here and here.

Of course, there are unofficial predictors of winter weather, too. Folklore signs include persimmon seed formation. The persimmons in the state predict a cold winter.

Wooly worms are also a favorite predictor. The furrier the worms, the worse the weather. No word on whether wooly worms in the state are woollier than normal.

If the number of foggy August days matters, we’re in for a snowy winter.

Other “signs” of an upcoming harsh winter include early bird migrations, unusual squirrel activity, heavier coats on furry animals such as goats and deer and, at least in Arkansas, frenzied grocery store runs, leaving no bread or milk on shelves anywhere in the state.
Upcoming in December

General Events
4 — CJA New Judges Seminar (ADEM Presentation) & SW Area Meeting in Grant Co.
8 — UA Monticello’s StormReady ceremony
9 — Blackout Procedures Training at ADEM
10-11 — AR School Board Association Conference at Statehouse Convention Center
12 Dec — Handling Unusual Requests Training at ADEM

HazMat Training
1 — HazMat Awareness in Pulaski County.
4-6 — HazMat Ops Course in Washington County.
6-7 — HazMat Ops Course in Pulaski County.

Exercises
1 — White County Hazmat Spill Field Exercise.
17 — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.

Extracurricular
24-26 — Christmas Holidays, Gov. Mike Beebe proclaimed the 26th a holiday for state employees.

Upcoming in January

General Training
19 — Meth Lab Awareness, Woodruff County.
20 — Bio Diesel Awareness, Woodruff County.
26 — Terrorism Awareness, Franklin County.

HazMat Training
5-6 — HazMat Awareness in Lee County.
7 — Train the Trainer, Midway Training Center in Baxter County.
12 — HazMat Awareness in Franklin County.
19-30 — HazMat Technician, 80 hours, Arkansas County.

Exercises
21 — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.
Regional event proposed by NE

Northeast Area Coordinator Anthony Coy proposed a regional event designed to meet local exercise rules and garner widespread media attention for the emergency management community.

He envisioned an “area command” set up in Jonesboro with the county officials directing resources to their respective counties and to and from other counties from that central location.

“You would have the exercise going on in your county that you could call your own, and you would have that exercise going on with the other counties. You can exercise a lot of your equipment,” Coy said.

The area coordinator suggested that a regional event would highlight emergency response on a large scale.

“It would be some good public relations for your county’s emergency management program,” he said.

Coy suggested pulling together a planning committee to explore such an exercise and added that he would plan the event for early summer, after the spring severe weather period but before summer’s dog days.

Coy suggested the event during the Nov. 17 area meeting.

Governor names three to board

Three appointments to the state Fire Protection Services Board have been recently announced by the office of Gov. Mike Beebe.

Shane Dallas of Caldwell has been reappointed to the board. His term ends in 2017. Also reappointed to a term through 2017 was David Dayringer of Fayetteville.

Jimmy Sullivent of Alma will replace Fred Taylor, and his term runs through October of 2017.

Not the dog days

Members of Central Arkansas Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 1 braved winter weather elements at a recent training event in Kansas. To see more images from the event, click here.

Follow ADEM on social media for real-time news and information!
Arkansas may soon become the fifth U.S. state to formalize a post-disaster, rapid-deployment building inspection program.

INSPARK – INSpect ARKansas – pairs volunteer inspection experts with emergency managers to determine the safeness of buildings after natural disasters, most often an earthquake.

“The main function will be to provide inspection teams to go out to residential and commercial structures after a disaster, namely earthquakes but also floods, tornadoes and windstorms, and identify if the structure is safe to occupy,” explained Katie Belknap, ADEM natural hazards planner.

Though training courses for this emergency management role have been around for many years, ADEM is only now formalizing the process to create an official group of trained volunteers to perform these tasks, based on lessons learned from the Capstone 14 exercise and the tornado event last April in Faulkner County.

Once formalized, these teams could provide inspection services to other areas as an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Mission-Ready Package (MRP) team.

“This will take some of the burden off local emergency managers, who currently are doing most of this inspecting, and allow them to focus on other tasks as they are assigned during disaster,” Belknap noted.

The program targets code officials, building inspectors, engineers, architects and general contractors who complete two courses – Applied Technology Council (APT) 20 Post-Earthquake Safety Evaluation of Buildings and FEMA 154 Rapid Observation of Vulnerability and Estimation Risk (ROVER).

Officials with Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) are working to expand the program throughout earthquake-prone regions of the country.

Training opportunities are ongoing at various locations around the state, and Belknap said naming a board of directors is a next step.

“We have a database of members who meet the current training requirements and will utilize them within the newly named program,” she explained. “We hope to have the program fully functional by September 2015. Missouri, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois and Mississippi will be participating in a multistate exercise to identify shortfalls within their programs at the state and national levels.”

For more information, contact Belknap at (501) 683-6700 or visit the ADEM website to register for an upcoming course.
Annual report highlights incidents

In Federal Fiscal Year 2014, transportation incidents and hazardous materials releases accounted for 57 percent of all reported emergency management incidents in Arkansas.

A report compiled by ADEM shows that transportation incidents were the most common type of emergency management situation — 31 percent of all such incidents. Hazardous materials incidents accounted for 26 percent of the total.

Natural disasters made up 10 percent of the total. Search and rescue incidents and fires each accounted for 5 percent of the total. Three honeybee swarm events were reported.

To view the complete report, click [here](#).

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SmartPrepare training available online

A webinar produced by Rave Mobile Safety will introduce local emergency managers to SmartPrepare, a program that gathers and indexes relevant information for emergency response planning.

SmartPrepare is a companion service to Smart911, the program that allows residents to enter personal information that displays to emergency dispatchers if they ever call 911. SmartPrepare allows residents to enter various types of information, such as whether they have medical devices that require electricity.

Emergency managers can then use that information to allocate resources based on the needs of the population.

The webinar, which will be on Dec. 9, is a prerequisite to SmartPrepare credentialing.

For more information about SmartPrepare, visit the Rave Mobile Safety [website](#) or contact Randie Jones, 911 coordinator, at 501.683.6700 or randie.jones@adem.arkansas.gov.

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Never-ending

Maintenance Specialist Willie Harris installs new light bulbs at ADEM. The agency’s maintenance staff is responsible for the grounds, facilities and equipment.
Not many counties in the nation, let alone the state, are more familiar with the destructive nature and severe threat that violent storms can bring than Faulkner County.

This familiarity is a driving force behind the county’s Emergency Manager Sheila McGhee working toward accreditation for the county as Storm Ready.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) program spells out several criteria that county officials must meet. They include having a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center; more than one way to receive severe weather warnings and to alert the public; a system that monitors local weather conditions; and a formal hazardous weather plan that includes training for severe weather spotters and emergency exercises.

McGhee has worked with municipal officials throughout the county and provided each municipality with a NOAA Weather Radio, preprogrammed to the county’s frequency. Storm Ready has been a popular program in Arkansas for some time, as more than two dozen entities have achieved accreditation.

Sixteen counties are Storm Ready. Others include nine communities, two commercial sites, three universities, one military site and five supporting organizations.

The Storm Ready universities are University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, University of Arkansas at Monticello and Southern Arkansas University. Little Rock Air Force Base and Arkansas Children’s Hospital are also part of the program. Communities that are accredited include Texarkana, Rogers, Hot Springs and Alma. Accredited counties include several in Northwest Arkansas, a cluster in Central Arkansas, Craighead, Jackson, Crittenden and Howard.

For more information about the program, visit the NOAA Storm Ready website.

FaulknerCo reaching storm-ready status

Federal Surplus Property

Honoring veterans

Kyle Miller, Federal Surplus Property maintenance specialist, and his daughter, Jamie, spent Veterans Day morning handing out doughnuts around Conway. Jamie participates in JROTC, plays the flute in the Conway Junior High Marching Band and volunteers throughout the community.

Have news to share?
Contact ADEM PIO
publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov
Eton FRX3 hand turbine NOAA AM/FM weather alert radio with smartphone charger. Never be without important emergency information with this radio. Power it with batteries, DC, its integrated solar panel or hand-crank. It also has a built-in flashlight. It may even pop popcorn. $50

Solar JOOS USB gadget charger. When the only available power is coming from the sun, this battery charger is worth its light weight in gold. Once charged, the internal battery stores enough power to charge a cell phone several times. $150

SteriPEN Adventurer Opti. Just because water is coming out of the faucet doesn’t mean it’s safe to drink. Kill 99.9% of all harmful Protozoa, bacteria and viruses out of a quart of water in just 90 seconds with this water sterilizer. Two batteries are enough to sterilize 1,000 gallons of water. $77

NPower PEG (Person Energy Generator). This little gadget turns your kinetic energy into power. Walk or bike or simply shake it, and in a few minutes you have enough power to charge a cell phone with enough juice to make a short call. $130

Motorola MH23OR two-way radio. If cell towers go down and landlines don’t work, these powerful radios will send messages 23 miles. Twenty-two channels and 11 built-in weather channels. $46

Bestek MRI3011J2 12V to 110V power inverter. Turn your vehicle battery’s power into power for your cell phone or laptop or whatever. $27

Leatherman New Wave Multitool. Do we really need to explain why this is a great tool? Soldiers in Switzerland want this. That’s how good it is. $90
Dual roles
Tim Reavis reviews a case file in the Homeland Security Branch. Reavis, grants coordinator, is serving as interim Citizen Corps coordinator until hiring officials fill the position.

EM community urged to join event
ADEM staffers and others are welcome to join in the Little Rock Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis on Dec. 6. The event will begin at 11 a.m. at the Clinton Presidential Library. Cost to join is $30.

To join the team — ADEM’s Antlers — click here. For more information, contact Erin Sullivan, EMPG coordinator, at 501-683-6700 or erin.sullivan@adem.arkansas.gov.

Outreach
Ross Schultz, administrative specialist, Disaster Management Division, participates in Park Fest at Burns Park recently. The event included various safety and preparedness exhibits.
November’s ADEM exercise focused on a winter weather event that affected numerous counties across the northern third of the state. Pictured are (clockwise from top right) James Tiner, Ken Gibson, Cody Shreve, Tammy Shadwick and Tim Johnson.
State Library services free to state employees

State government employees may access a variety of information types and services through the State Library free of charge.

Some of those services, including access to dozens of databases, are available remotely.

The library offers traditional information sources — books, newspapers and periodicals — as well as digital publications.

Perhaps the most extensive portion of the library’s information reach is its online databases. Ranging from Academic Search Complete to WorldCat (FirstSearch), the databases contain information on myriad subjects.

Included in the in-house only database selections are Arkansas Democrat-Gazette archives, Arkansas Legislative Digest, LexisNexis Total Research System, NOAA Climatology Data, National Technical Information Service and Value Line Library Investment Survey.

Databases that are available from remote locations include Access Newspaper Archive, CQ State Stats, Sanborn Digital Maps, Statistical Insight and World History Collection.

Public computers and wi-fi are available from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day, and the library also offers copy services for work-related materials for state agency employees.

Among the digital state publications available are eligibility requirements for child day care centers and public health agencies, as well as weekly fishing reports.

For budding inventors, there is a patent and trademark section that includes information on do-it-yourself patents, copyright and trademark and other licensing subjects.

The library’s website is here, and its physical address is 900 West Capitol, Suite 100, Little Rock.
Public Affairs

When two hands aren’t enough ...

By Rick Fahr, ADEM PIO

I’m still new at this state government public affairs gig.

True enough, I worked in public affairs for the Army National Guard for nine years, and in the private sector, I headed up newsrooms across the state.

But being the person on the other end of the telephone during an emergency situation is mostly new.

Though we haven’t had a full-scale crisis in my short tenure (knocking on wood and crossing fingers), a couple rounds of bad weather and a train wreck gave a taste of what’s to come.

And I already see one problem — too many phone calls and not enough hands to answer them in a timely manner.

Is the only option taking messages and returning them one at a time? Or might there be a better, more effective and efficient way to transmit information we want folks to have and the media wants to disseminate to them?

I believe there is, and this process will not only help us here at ADEM, but it can help emergency managers around the state.

Our plan involves setting up regular media briefings through a dial-in conference call. Depending on the situation, these briefings may begin as frequently as every half-hour shortly after a situation arises, tapering off in frequency as news slows down.

I envision these briefings following a standard, consistent pattern. First, I or whoever happens to be the lead PIO on duty, will give a situation report with as up-to-date information as we have, noting how the situation has changed, if it has, since the last briefing. Second, we will open up the call for questions. We may well put out a media release at the time of the briefing.

So, instead of giving the same information to a dozen or more reporters in separate telephone conversations or e-mails, we will share that information at one time and answer questions once, instead of over and over.

Understand, too, that having a briefing to say that there is no new information can be useful from our perspective, as it can ward off continuous calls asking for updates.

Media members can use these briefing times as “hooks” for their audience, and the briefings have news value even if there isn’t anything new to report: Saying there is no new news is NOT the same as not saying anything, from the vantage point of someone with a website or broadcast air to fill.

Of course, some media members will want specific “sound” for an interview, and that’s fine. We’ll handle those requests as time allows, but our goal will be to get as much bang for our public affairs buck as we can in an aggregate manner.

Local emergency managers may be able to deploy a similar tactic if they wish. If they have the technology available, the managers may want to consider scheduled media briefings, instead of taking individual calls or, unfortunately, not returning media calls in a timely manner.

At the end of the day, sharing information is an important part of our job. The people who pay our bills deserve to know what’s going on and what we’re doing to combat any crisis that comes our way.

We should use technology and efficiencies to save time and effort whenever we can. Cutting down the time we spend to answer redundant questions gives us more time to do the rest of our work.
ADEM staff — and several former staff members and friends — gathered in early November for a Thanksgiving feast. Among the moments (clockwise from top right): Rick Kelley, center, offers a blessing before the meal; Director David Maxwell thanks the staff for their work during the year; Larry Pullon serves barbecue to Ken Gibson; Linda Sims and Ali Rye make their way through the food line; and Sheila Annable visits with former ADEM staffer Myra Jane Biggers. To see more images from the event, click here.