

Are You Prepared for the Unthinkable?

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

Let's face it, we don't really like to think about all the horrible things that can happen. Tornadoes happen somewhere else. My house can't really flood. I don't even want to think about a house fire. But bad things do happen to good people and all too often the damage is far worse than it had to be because a little planning and preparation never occurred.

Being prepared for a catastrophic event takes place at several levels including physically, mentally and financially. It means having some savings set aside for emergencies. It means having an inventory of your home on file with your insurance agent and tucked away in a safe deposit box or somewhere outside your home. It may mean something as simple as making sure you have a good supply of bottled water and emergency food rations in case an ice storm takes down power lines. We like to think that we are independent souls, but we also know that if something happens to the infrastructure that disrupts our normal way of life, we can get cranky in a hurry!

There are so many little items in our daily lives that we simply aren't prepared for. If a tornado is on it's way, or a chemical spill occurred near your house that was going to cause you to be relocated for several days, a week or longer, how fast would you be able to get the essential necessities and be out the door? What are those essential necessities anyway? We recently just observed the ten year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Talk about a life changing disaster!

The first step for many of us is to simply create a grab and go bag, or an emergency kit. This is something that sits out of the way but you can get your hands on it in a hurry IF you have to go or simply if you get stranded at home. You should consider putting a couple of bottles of water, some food items like granola bars, a flashlight and a small battery powered radio with extra batteries for both. If you have medications that you take daily, you may want to consider putting a week's worth of medications in here and then refresh it every few months. Also consider putting in a list of medications, critical contact information and some folks even keep a copy of their driver's license or passport in here. If you really want to learn more about trying to stay ahead of a disaster, I've got just the program for you!

PrepareKansas is a month long online event, just getting started, that provides you with a series of preparedness steps. These are designed so that you and your family can work on helping to become more aware of potential disasters and what you can do to prepare for them IF they happen. The challenge is also to help educate you as to what kind of events you could face. It's just getting started and there's still time to register and participate.

The great thing is that it's all online and you can work on it at home at your own speed. To get started, point your internet browser to <https://blogs.k-state.edu/preparekansas/> and read the information and instructions on that page. From this page you can click on a link to get yourself signed up. The process takes about 60 seconds. After that you will receive a few emails each week that will provide information and links to more information of what you can do to help yourself and your family be prepared for the unthinkable!