

February 20, 2003

Dear Media Representative,

According to the Michigan Department of State Police and the National Weather Service, Michigan experienced 11 tornadoes, numerous flood events and thunderstorms that damaged or destroyed property. In April 2002, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan experienced a major flood event resulting in over \$7 million in damages. Accordingly, I have declared the week of March 16-22, 2003 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in Michigan.

Severe weather and flooding provided for considerable property damage in Michigan in 2002. Michigan experienced 11 tornadoes, along with numerous windstorms, instances of large hail and flood events that made for an active severe weather season last year. Michigan residents need to be prepared for the dangers of thunderstorms, tornadoes, windstorms, flooding, and other severe events.

June 8, 2003 will mark the 50th anniversary of Michigan's worst natural disaster, in terms of deaths and injuries: the Flint-Beecher Tornado. This was the last tornado to kill over 100 people in a single tornado event anywhere in the United States. On June 8th, 1953, 116 people lost their lives in the Flint-Beecher community, and 844 people suffered injuries. The Flint-Beecher Tornado was just one of seven tornadoes that occurred that horrible evening across the eastern portion of the Lower Peninsula. Those other six tornadoes resulted in an additional 9 deaths, 52 injuries, and damage stretching from Alpena to Erie.

The Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness has developed an awareness campaign to inform Michigan residents of the importance of being prepared for severe weather. A crucial aspect of this campaign is the distribution of the enclosed information, which is for your use during Severe Weather Awareness Week, as well as in the future should a flood or tornado occur in your area. Your assistance in distributing this information to the public is appreciated. This effort helps Michigan citizens prepare themselves and their families to minimize the loss of life and destruction of property that accompany a disaster.

As a sign of the state's commitment to severe weather safety, in 1998, the legislature endorsed Public Act 45 of 1998, which requires all schools in the state to conduct two tornado drills annually. We are encouraging schools to conduct one of those drills during Severe Weather Awareness Week. This is an excellent opportunity for visual or editorial coverage.

I encourage you to contact any of the Michigan Severe Weather Awareness Committee members or your local representatives from the National Weather Service, Emergency Management or Red Cross offices for more information about severe weather safety in Michigan.

Jennifer Granholm
Governor

**Michigan Committee for
Severe Weather Awareness**
4000 Collins Road, P.O. Box 30636, Lansing, MI
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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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**Governor Granholm Proclaims March 16 – 22, 2003 Severe Weather
Awareness Week in Michigan**

(Lansing, MI February 14, 2003) Governor Jennifer Granholm has proclaimed March 16 - 22, 2003 Severe Weather Awareness Week in Michigan. The purpose of the awareness week is to help Michigan residents understand the risks associated with severe weather and to provide information to help them protect themselves and their property in the event of severe weather.

While 2002 was a below normal year for severe weather and flooding, these events still resulted in considerable property damage in Michigan. Tornadoes, severe thunderstorm winds and hail, lightening, and flooding caused nearly \$100 million in damage. Especially hard hit was central and western upper Michigan where they experienced an above average number of severe weather and flooding events. Michigan experienced 12 tornadoes, below the average of 16, along with numerous windstorms, instances of large hail and flood events. Unfortunately, eight injuries accompanied some of the storms, but there were no weather-related deaths from severe storms or flooding in 2002. Michigan residents are encouraged to be prepared for the dangers of thunderstorms, tornadoes, windstorms, flooding, and other severe events.

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June 8, 2003 will mark the 50th anniversary of Michigan's worst natural disaster, in terms of deaths and injuries; the Flint-Beecher Tornado. This was the last tornado to kill over 100 people in a single tornado event anywhere in the United States. On June 8th, 1953, 116 people lost their lives in the Flint-Beecher area, and 844 people suffered injuries. The Flint-Beecher Tornado was just one of seven tornadoes that occurred that horrible evening across the eastern portion of the Lower Peninsula. Those other six tornadoes resulted in an additional nine deaths, 52 injuries, and damage stretching from Alpena to Erie.

The Flint-Beecher tornado was rated as an F5, the highest rating on the Fujita scale of damage. Winds were likely in excess of 200 mph as the 800 yard wide tornado moved on its 27 mile path through Genesee and Lapeer counties. Approximately 550 homes were destroyed or had "major damage", resulting in around \$10 million (almost \$200 million adjusted for inflation) in damage.

A commemoration and Survivor Reunion for the 50th anniversary of the Flint-Beecher Tornado will be held on June 8th, 2003 at the Beecher High School. The event will be conducted through a partnership with the National Weather Service, Genesee and Lapeer County Emergency Management, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, the Sloan Museum, Heart of Senior Citizen Services, and the Flint Journal.

There have been amazing advancements in technology for detecting these types of weather events, as well as advancements in communications to alert Michigan citizens of impending severe weather. In fact, in 1953 tornado watches and warnings were not even part of the National Weather Service's operations. However, it is still up to every person to make sure that his or her home, school or place of business has an effective severe weather plan.

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The 50th anniversary of the Flint-Beecher tornado offers the state an opportunity to take the time to develop and review severe weather safety plan for your home, school and business.

Developing severe weather plans for our homes and schools are very important, but it is just as important to develop a plan for all businesses. On November 10, 2002 a violent F4 tornado ripped through the city of Van Wert, Ohio. This tornado hit the local movie theater and deposited two vehicles in the auditorium. Just minutes before the tornado hit, many children were watching a moving in that same theater. Thanks to the action of the movie theater management, they evacuated the people in the theater when they received word of the tornado warning. If not for those actions, there would have certainly been many more injuries, and perhaps deaths.

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Committee Contacts

Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness February 2003

The Committee was formed in 1991 to coordinate public information efforts regarding flood, tornado and winter safety.

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Following is a list of tornadoes experienced by each county in Michigan:

County	1950-2002	2002	County	1950-2002	2002
Alcona	10	0	Lake	1	0
Alger	5	0	Lapeer	17	0
Allegan	24	0	Leelanau	3	0
Alpena	11	0	Lenawee	30	0
Antrim	8	0	Livingston	21	0
Arenac	6	0	Luce	2	0
Baraga	2	0	Mackinac	5	0
Barry	17	0	Macomb	18	1
Bay	10	0	Manistee	1	0
Benzie	4	0	Marquette	6	0
Berrien	27	0	Mason	4	0
Branch	15	0	Mecosta	9	0
Calhoun	14	1	Menominee	6	0
Cass	13	0	Midland	8	0
Charlevoix	4	1	Missaukee	8	0
Cheboygan	5	1	Monroe	27	0
Chippewa	6	0	Montcalm	9	0
Clare	7	0	Montmorency	5	0
Clinton	16	0	Muskegon	7	0
Crawford	10	0	Newaygo	11	1
Delta	10	1	Oakland	29	0
Dickinson	7	3	Oceana	5	0
Eaton	20	0	Ogemaw	13	0
Emmet	5	0	Ontonagon	2	0
Genesee	36	0	Osceola	12	1
Gladwin	9	0	Oscoda	3	0
Gogebic	2	0	Otsego	3	0
Grand Traverse	4	0	Ottawa	18	0
Gratiot	12	0	Presque Isle	6	1
Hillsdale	21	0	Roscommon	8	0
Houghton	1	0	Saginaw	17	0
Huron	10	0	Sanilac	11	0
Ingham	23	0	Schoolcraft	3	0
Ionia	16	0	Shiawassee	21	0
Iosco	11	0	St. Clair	17	0
Iron	5	0	St. Joseph	9	0
Isabella	12	0	Tuscola	13	0
Jackson	16	0	Van Buren	16	0
Kalamazoo	21	1	Washtenaw	22	0
Kalkaska	6	0	Wayne	27	0
Kent	30	1	Wexford	6	0
Keweenaw	1	0			



Tornado Facts

1. What is a tornado?

It is a column of violently rotating winds extending down from a thunderstorm cloud and touching the surface of the earth.

2. What is the difference between a tornado and a funnel cloud?

A funnel cloud is also a column of violently rotating winds extending down from a thunderstorm; however, it does not touch the earth.

3. How many tornadoes usually occur in Michigan every year?

An average of 16 tornadoes occurs in Michigan each year. Since 1950, 239 persons have been killed due to tornadoes. During this same time, Michigan has experienced 830 tornadoes.

4. When do tornadoes generally occur?

Most tornadoes occur during the months of June, July and August in the late afternoon and evening hours. However, tornadoes can occur anytime of the day or night in almost any month during the year.

5. How fast do tornadoes travel?

Tornadoes generally travel from the southwest and at an average speed of 30 miles per hour. However, some tornadoes have very erratic paths, with speeds approaching 70 mph.

6. How far do tornadoes travel once they touch the ground?

The average Michigan tornado is on the ground for less than 10 minutes and travels a distance of about 5 miles. However, they do not always follow the norm, and have been known to stay on the ground for more than an hour and travel more than 100 miles.

7. What is a tornado watch?

A tornado/severe thunderstorm watch is issued whenever conditions exist for severe weather to develop. Watches are usually for large areas about two-thirds the size of lower Michigan and are usually two-to-six hours long. Watches give you time to plan and prepare.

8. What is a tornado warning?

The local Weather Service (NWS) office issues a tornado warning whenever a tornado has been sighted or NWS Doppler Radar indicates a thunderstorm capable of producing a tornado. A severe thunderstorm warning is issued whenever a severe thunderstorm is observed or NWS Doppler Radar indicates a thunderstorm capable of producing damaging winds or large hail. Warnings are for smaller areas, such as counties, and are usually 30 minutes to one hour in length. You must act immediately when you first hear the warning. If severe weather is reported near you, seek shelter immediately. If not, keep a constant lookout for severe weather and stay near a shelter.

9. How do I find out about a warning if my electricity is already out?

In some areas, civil emergency sirens will be your first official warning. In addition, if your television or radio has battery back-up capability, you may receive National Weather Service warnings from local media.

Tornado/Thunderstorm Safety

Preparing for a tornado:

- Have emergency supplies on hand, including a battery-operated radio, a flashlight and a supply of fresh batteries.
- Know the location of designated shelter areas in public facilities, such as schools, shopping centers and other public buildings.
- Make an inventory of household furnishings and other possessions. Supplement it with photographs of each room. Keep in a safe place.
- Plan ahead. Be sure everyone in your household knows where to go and what to do in case of a tornado warning.

What to do when thunderstorms approach:

- Move to a sturdy building.
- If too far from shelter, find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles, but not in a place subject to flooding. If you are boating or swimming, get to land and shelter immediately.
- If you feel your skin tingle or hair stand on end, lightning may be about to strike. Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Minimize contact with the ground.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances not necessary for receiving weather information. Use telephones only in an emergency.

What to do when a tornado threatens:

- Get into a shelter, preferably a permanent structure, in the basement or lowest floor.
- Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. Protect your head with a pillow, blankets, or even a mattress.
- In homes and small buildings, go to the basement and get under something sturdy. If no basement is available, go to an interior part of home of the lowest level. A good rule of thumb is to put as many walls between you and the tornado as possible.
- In schools, hospitals and public places, move to designated shelter areas. Interior hallways on the lowest floors are best.
- Mobile homes and vehicles offer virtually no shelter. Leave them and go to the nearest shelter. If there is no shelter nearby, the best alternative is to lie in the nearest ditch and shield your head with your arms.

After a tornado:

- Inspect your property, including motor vehicles for damage. Check for electrical problems and gas leaks and report them to the utility company at once.
- Watch out for fallen power lines. Stay out of damaged buildings until you are sure they are safe and will not collapse. Secure your property from further damage or theft.
- Use only approved or chlorinated supplies of drinking water. Check food supplies.

Anytime:

- Listen for NOAA Weather Radio, or local radio, television and cable stations for the latest weather updates. To insure a continuous flow of weather information, make sure the NOAA Weather Radio, or another radio or television has a battery back up.
- For NOAA Weather Radio information, including a station near you, see the NOAA Weather Radio page on the Internet at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/nwspub.htm>. The National Weather Service, American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency produce these publications.

Lightning Safety

Lightning Protection

Lightning can provide a spectacular display of light on a dark night. This awesome show of nature also causes death and destruction. Lightning is the visible discharge of electrical energy. It is often accompanied by thunder – which is a sonic boom created by the same discharge. **If you hear thunder, lightning is a threat**, even if the storm seems miles away and the sky is blue.

Lightning's electrical energy seeks a path to ground – your home, the trees in your yard or even you can be that chosen path!

Protect Yourself

Lightning threatens much more than property. When there is lightning nearby:

- Do not use the telephone except in an emergency.
- Stay away from electrical appliances, TVs, fireplaces, metal objects, windows or doors.
- Seek shelter immediately in an enclosed building or vehicle.
- Avoid isolated trees, high ground, and bodies of water or large open areas.

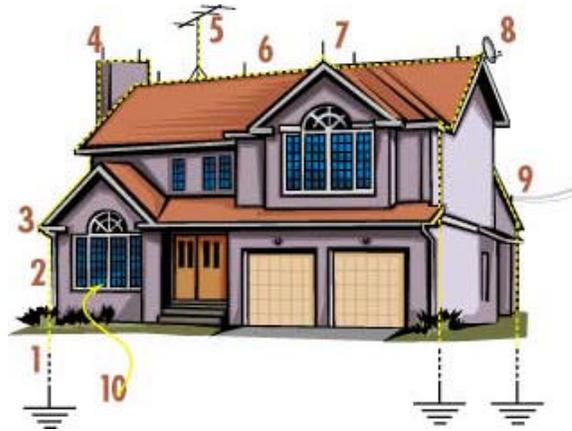
What does a lightning protection system do?

A lightning protection system has two objectives:

1. Provide a direct path for the lightning to follow to ground.
2. Prevent destruction, damage, injury or death as it travels that path.

It is important to note that a lightning protection system does not attract lightning. It also cannot prevent a lightning strike; a lightning protection system does provide a safe path to ground for the electric current.

What Does a Lightning Protection System Look Like?



Lightning Protection Key

- 1) Minimum of two ground rods (electrodes) at least 10 feet deep
- 2) Down conductors
- 3) Connect gutters or other grounded metals as required
- 4) Air terminals (lightning rods) located within two feet of outside corners of chimney
- 5) Antenna mast connected to roof conductor
- 6) Air terminals (lightning rods) spaced 20 feet apart along the ridges and within two feet of ridge ends
- 7) Dormers protected
- 8) Roof projections such as weather vanes or satellite dishes should be connected to lightning protection system
- 9) Surge protection devices installed at main electrical panel or meter
- 10) Surge protection devices installed at electronics in house

Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness
4000 Collins Road, P.O. Box 30636, Lansing, MI 48909-8136

Press Release

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For more information contact:
Any MCSWA committee member

RECORD FLOODING CAUSES SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE DURING 2002

Michigan didn't avoid the ravages of flooding in 2002. In fact, there was record flooding in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in April 2002 that caused damages in excess of \$7 million.

To focus attention on flood safety planning, Governor Jennifer Granholm has declared March 16 - 22, 2003, as "Severe Weather Awareness Week" in Michigan. Residents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with flood safety procedures.

During the record flooding, many local and county roads were closed due to high water and several dams were in jeopardy of failing. Former Governor John Engler declared a state of emergency for Gogebic County and the county was later declared a disaster area. In all, major flooding on rivers and lakes occurred in eight counties of the Upper Peninsula.

According to the Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness flooding along Michigan's rivers can occur anytime of the year and is the result of excessive rainfall and/or the combination of rainfall and snowmelt. Ice jams also cause flooding in winter and early spring. Severe thunderstorms may cause flooding during the summer or fall, although these are normally localized and have more impact on watercourses with smaller drainage areas. Oftentimes, flooding may not necessarily be directly attributable to a river, stream or lake overflowing its banks. Rather, it may simply be the combination of excessive rainfall and/or snowmelt, saturated or frozen ground, and inadequate drainage. With no place to go, the water will find the lowest elevations – areas that are often not in a floodplain. That type of flooding is becoming increasingly prevalent in Michigan, as development outstrips the ability of the drainage infrastructure

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to properly carry and disburse the water flow. Flooding also occurs due to combined storm and sanitary sewers that cannot handle the tremendous flow of water that often accompanies storm events. Typically, the result is water backing into basements, which damages mechanical systems and can create serious public health and safety concerns.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality estimates that about 6% of Michigan's land is flood-prone, including about 200,000 buildings. The southern half of the Lower Peninsula contains the areas with the most flood damage potential. "It is not just the southern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan that needs to be concerned with flooding, flooding can occur at anytime and anywhere in Michigan," said Mark Walton, a member of the Committee. "For example, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, record setting snowfall in February and March set the stage for spring floods in 2002 and resulted in record flooding in April." The Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division estimates that Michigan's annual flood-related damages are between \$ 60 and \$ 100 million.

Residents should be aware that regular homeowners' insurance policies do not cover damages that result from flooding. Coverage is available through a federal program; however, in Michigan only about 15 % of structures subject to flooding are actually insured against the risk.

Currently there are approximately 769 Michigan communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and over 25,000 policies in force with coverage in excess of \$2.5 billion. To purchase flood insurance under the program, residents must live in one of the participating communities. Coverage can be obtained through most licensed property/casualty insurance agents. To determine if flood insurance is available in a community, call NFIP at 1-800-638-6620.

Under the NFIP, a flood is defined in part, as a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas from overflow of inland or tidal waters or from the unusual and rapid accumulation of runoff of surface waters from any source. It is important to note that this flood definition would cover general street flooding that was coming into a home, it does not have to come from a river. In the standard flood insurance policy, direct physical losses by "flood" are covered. Also covered are losses resulting from erosion caused by waves or currents of water exceeding

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anticipated cyclical levels or erosion accompanied by a severe storm, flash flood, abnormal tidal surge, or the like. Basement flooding is a covered hazard under the NFIP policy, however homeowners should be aware that personal property is not covered in a basement location.

Losses from water seepage, sewer backup, or hydrostatic pressure are covered only when they occur in conjunction with a general condition of flooding. In addition to obtaining adequate insurance protection, residents should take the following precautions in anticipation of flooding:

- Learn the best route from your home or place of business to high, safe ground in case you have to evacuate in a hurry.
- Prepare and maintain a list of personal property to substantiate losses covered by insurance.
- Familiarize household members with turn-off procedures for gas and electricity.

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Flood Facts



1. What is a flood and when do most occur?

A flood is the inundation of a normally dry area caused by an increased water level in an established watercourse, such as a river, stream, or drainage ditch, or ponding of water at or near the point where the rain fell. Flood can occur anytime during the year. However, many occur seasonally after winter snow melts or heavy spring rains.

2. What are flash floods?

Flash floods occur suddenly, usually within 6 hours of the rain event, and result from heavy localized rainfall. Flash floods can begin before the rain stops. Water level on small streams may rise quickly in heavy rainstorms, especially near the headwaters of river basins. Heavy rains can also cause flash flooding in areas where the floodplain has been urbanized.

3. What are other causes of flooding in Michigan?

Ice jams and dam failures can also cause both flooding and flash flooding.

4. Are people killed as a result of floods?

Many people are killed by flash floods when driving or walking on roads and bridges that are covered by water. In fact, flash floods are the number one weather-related killer in the United States. Even 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock you off your feet, and a depth of only 2 feet of water will float many of today's automobiles. If you are in a car and water starts rising, get out and move to higher ground.

5. What is a flood watch?

A flood watch indicates that flash flooding or flooding is possible within the designated WATCH area--be alert. It is issued to inform the public and cooperating agencies that current and developing weather conditions are such that there is a threat of flooding, but the occurrence is neither certain or imminent.

6. What is a flash flood or flood warning?

A flash flood or flood warning indicates that flash flooding or flooding is already occurring or imminent within the designated WARNING area--take necessary precautions at once. When a flash flood or flood warning is issued for your area, act quickly. Get out of areas subject to flooding and avoid areas where flooding has already occurred.

7. What is a flash flood or flood statement?

A flash flood or flood statement is used for follow-up information regarding a flash flood or flood event.

Flood Safety



Preparing for a flood:

- Make an itemized list of personal property well in advance of a flood occurring. Photograph the interior and exterior of your home. Store the list, photos and documents in a safe place.
- Memorize the safest and fastest route to high ground. Assemble a disaster supplies kit containing: first aid kit, canned food and can opener, bottled water, extra clothing, rubber boots and gloves, NOAA Weather Radio, battery-operated radio, emergency cooking equipment, flashlight and extra batteries.
- If you live in a frequently flooded area, keep sandbags, plastic sheets and lumber on hand to protect property. Install check valves in building sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Know the elevation of your property in relation to nearby streams and other waterways, and plan what you will do and where you will go in a flood emergency.

When a flood threatens:

- If forced to leave your property and time permits, move essential items to safe ground, fill tanks to keep them from floating away and grease immovable machinery.
- Store a supply of drinking water in clean bathtubs and in large containers.
- Get out of areas subject to flooding. This includes dips, low spots, flood plains, etc.

During a flood:

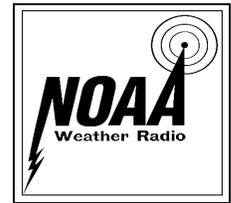
- Avoid areas subject to sudden flooding.
- Even 6 inches of fast moving floodwater can knock you off your feet, and a depth of 2 feet will float your car! Never try to walk, swim or drive through such swift water.
- Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road. STOP! Turn around and go another way.
- Keep children from playing in floodwaters or near culverts and storm drains.

After a flood:

- Boil drinking water before using. If fresh food has come in contact with floodwaters, throw it out.
- Seek necessary medical care at the nearest hospital. Food, clothing, shelter and first aid are available at Red Cross shelters.
- Use flashlights, not lanterns or torches, to examine buildings. Flammables may be inside.
- Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.

How a NOAA Weather Radio Warning is Disseminated

NOAA Weather Radio is an “all hazards” radio network



- 1) Your local National Weather Service (NWS) Office uses available data sources such as Doppler Radar, Satellite Imagery, Surface Reports, and Spotter Reports to monitor hazardous weather threats.
- 2) If the threat of a tornado, severe thunderstorm, or flash flood is sufficiently high, then a warning is issued.
- 3) Forecasters generate a "hardcopy" of the warning using computer software. Menu-driven software allows the meteorologists to quickly select the type of warning needed, the valid time of the warning, and the counties that must be warned. Information such as affected areas or communities, timing of severe weather, and a safety message is included in this warning.
- 4) The warning is then broadcast live on the NOAA Weather Radio (NWR). If the warning is within the "official" NWR broadcast range (about 40 miles), a 1050 Hertz alarm tone precedes the warning. This 1050 Hertz alarm tone automatically activates NWR receivers equipped with the alert feature. The alarm tone lasts about 9 seconds, and allows people to deactivate their alarm and listen to the warning broadcast.

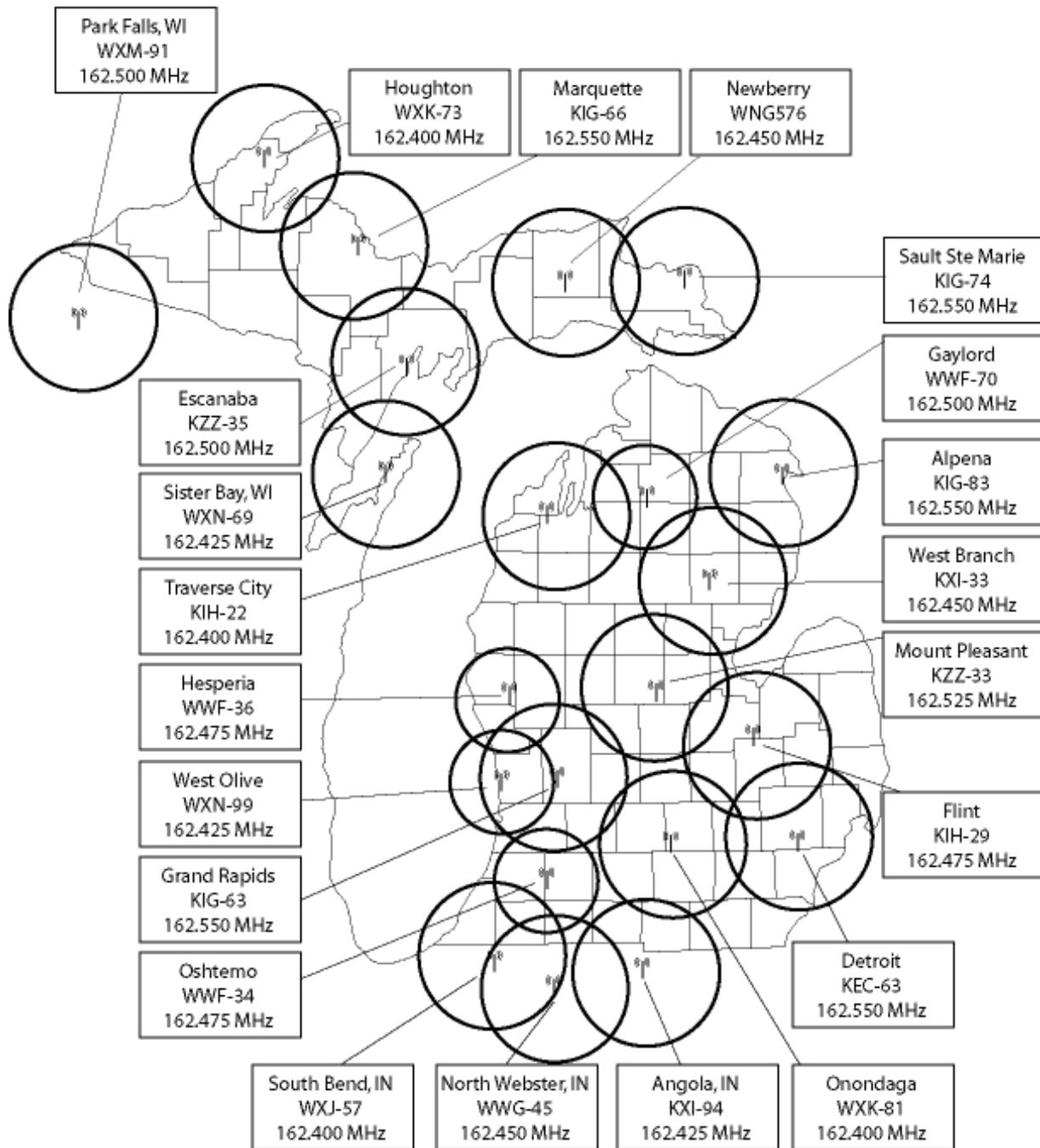
The NWR is also able to integrate into the Emergency Alert System (EAS), using the Specific Area Message Encoder (SAME). The EAS is activated for life-threatening weather events in specific areas, and incorporates all radio, TV, and cable stations. The weather threat is quickly disseminated on these commercial TV and radio stations, reaching a wide audience in the affected area(s).

- 5) The "hardcopy" of the warning is simultaneously sent, via satellite uplink, to a wide variety of customers, including the NOAA Weather Wire Service, Internet, The Weather Channel, and to major news wire services, such as the AP. These services distribute the warning to their customers, which include many local TV and radio stations. The local radio and TV stations then disseminate the warning to their listening and viewing audience.
- 6) Emergency Managers enact their local severe weather plans, such as activating local dissemination systems, positioning storm spotters, or activating outdoor sirens, as needed.
- 7) Updated information on the storm position and spotter reports is provided in follow-up severe weather statements and broadcast on the NWR as it becomes available.

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for the most timely and complete warning services!

NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts warning and post-event information for all types of hazards - both natural and technological. Working with other Federal agencies and the Federal Communications Commission's Emergency Alert System, NOAA Weather Radio is an “all hazards” radio, network making it the single source for the most comprehensive weather and emergency information available to the public.

Michigan NOAA Weather Radio Coverage





00-1<-r06
00-5+20W
-250-+22Z



Detroit/Pontiac

NWS Office, NOAA
9200 White Lake Road
White Lake, MI 48386-1126
(248) 625-3309, Ext. 726
Contact: Richard Pollman
www.crh.noaa.gov/dtx

Gaylord

NWS Office, NOAA
8800 Passenheim Road
Gaylord, MI 49735-9454
(989) 731-1194, Ext. 726
Contact: Brian Hirsch
www.crh.noaa.gov/apx

Grand Rapids

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Contact: Mike Heathfield
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Marquette

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Contact: Robin Turner
www.crh.noaa.gov/mqt

Northern Indiana

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WHEN SECONDS COUNT: STORMREADY COMMUNITIES ARE PREPARED

Ninety percent of all presidentially-declared disasters are weather related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$14 billion in damage. To help Americans guard against the ravages of severe weather, the National Weather Service has designed StormReady, a program aimed at arming America's communities with the communication and safety skills necessary to save lives and property.

StormReady prepares communities with an action plan that responds to the threat of all types of severe weather--from tornadoes to tsunamis. The entire community--from the mayor, emergency managers, to business leaders and civic groups--can take the lead on becoming StormReady. Local National Weather Service forecast offices work with communities to complete an application and review process. To be officially StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars;
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

Michigan StormReady Communities

The next time severe weather threatens, eight communities will be ready. In 2002 one community was designated as being StormReady. National Weather Service officials have declared St. Clair county as StormReady. Battle Creek, Dearborn Heights, Hudsonville, Montague/Whitehall, Sterling Heights; and Monroe and Washtenaw Counties have previously been designated as StormReady.

Storm Ready Certification Process

An advisory board, comprised of National Weather Service warning coordination meteorologists, and state and local emergency managers, will review applications from municipalities and visit the locations to verify the steps made in the process to become StormReady. StormReady communities must stay freshly prepared, because the designation is only valid for three years.

For more information about the StormReady program, please visit the following web site: www.nws.noaa.gov/stormready. Michigan specific information may be obtained from contacting the National Weather Service office that covers your area.