



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: 866- 920-MEMA

Media Contact
866-920-MEMA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 2009

MEMA uses social media for hurricane preparedness information

PEARL – This year the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is using social networking and micro-blogging tools to reach people with important hurricane preparedness information as part of Hurricane Preparedness Week.

The agency first launched a YouTube page, a Twitter account and Facebook pages several months ago to better serve a growing generation of people who may not get information and news through traditional means.

MEMA Director Mike Womack said it is important for his agency to communicate through a variety of media to encourage people to take precautions before the start of hurricane season.

“We have to pay attention to the way people are communicating with each other and be a part of that dialogue,” Womack said. “Since the information we release will help people protect themselves and survive a hurricane, we need to be accessible to the public and send messages in as many different ways as we can.”

MEMA has posted public service announcements about hurricane and tornado preparedness on YouTube featuring Governor Haley Barbour and former New Orleans Saints football star Deuce McAllister. Preparedness messages from each of these public figures have been viewed more than 1,200 times.

The public service messages are readily available for educational and informational uses to anyone by simply clicking the button on MEMA’s Web site at www.msema.org.

The agency has more than 400 followers on Twitter and the number is growing gradually. The public can follow updates and receive tips from MEMA by following the username MSEMA or visiting <http://twitter.com/msema>.

“Both the public and the news outlets want and need updates as they’re available and we are trying to provide this service,” Womack said. “We hope to use Twitter during hurricanes and other emergencies so people can get updates on the phones, especially if they are traveling because of an evacuation.”

-MORE-

“Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property”
Visit us online at www.msema.org

MEMA also posts hurricane awareness information through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Facebook group and Facebook fan page. People can also become Facebook fans of the agency and receive update messages about hurricane preparedness. The social networking group provides a space for people to follow happenings at MEMA and get information about the agency and what it does.

“We are still discovering how new media can help us get information out during emergency and non-emergency times,” Womack said. “As media evolves how people communicate, MEMA will try to keep up with the times and continue finding new ways to reach people.”

Governor Haley Barbour declared May 25-29 Mississippi’s Hurricane Preparedness Week.

For more information, contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at www.msema.org.

###