

Carlisle Barracks named StormReady

Spc. Jennifer Rick, U.S. Army War College Public Affairs Office

Carlisle Barracks prepared for emergencies, named StormReady



Representatives from Chester and Juniata counties, the city of Williamsport and Carlisle Barracks received certificates after their communities were declared "StormReady" at a ceremony Sept. 18 at the Letort View Community Center. Photo by Scott Finger.

September 18, 2008 – If there's one thing that is certain in this world, it's uncertainty; you can never predict exactly what's going to happen. The weather conditions are a prime example – they can turn on a dime. Being prepared for weather-related and other emergencies is key to helping keep people and families safe.

Carlisle Barracks, Chester and Juniata counties, and the city of Williamsport were recognized Sept. 18 for being "StormReady", in a ceremony held at the Letort View Community Center.

StormReady, a program started by the National Weather Service in 1998, strives to prepare communities with a plan of action in the event of severe weather.

"The first 72 hours of an emergency is something everyone needs to be prepared for," said Robert French, director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. "These programs help us take care of ourselves. StormReady has been very successful. Many communities, counties and military installations are participating."

To be considered StormReady, a community must be in conjunction with the NWS, state and local emergency services to:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operation center
- Have more than one method of receiving severe weather forecasts and warning, and alerting the

public

- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions
- Promote the significance of public readiness through community seminars
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding exercises

Chester County has an extensive storm preparedness system in place, explained Karl Mehn, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, Chester County Department of Emergency Services. The county is blanketed with weather-watching equipment, has backup batteries to provide three weeks of power in case of an emergency, is partnered with the University of Delaware and continually improving their systems.

"We are really looking forward to completing our system," Mehn said.

Mehn accepted a certificate on behalf of Chester County for their continued efforts in being StormReady. Accepting certificates for Juniata County were Teresa O'Neil, Juniata County Commissioner, and Allen Weaver, Juniata County Emergency Management Coordinator. Mayor Gabriel Campana and Assistant Fire Chief Tom Swigart accepted the award for the City of Williamsport. Lt. Col. Sergio Dickerson, garrison commander, accepted the certificate for Carlisle Barracks.

The post becoming StormReady comes at a time when emergency preparation is already in focus. September has been declared National Preparedness Month, and the Army recently launched the Ready Army campaign.

Ready Army's mission is to prepare all Soldiers, families, Army Civilians and contractors for all hazards, man-made or natural, and encourage them to "Get a kit. Make a plan. Be informed."

Carlisle Barracks has taken several steps to prepare for weather-related emergencies. Barry Shughart, post force protection officer, explained that 25 post employees – from the Department of Public Works, grounds workers and others who spend a lot of time outside – have been trained as "storm watchers". They attended a class given by the NWS at State College, Pa., to learn what weather clues to look for, and who to notify in the case of impending severe weather.

There is also a Davis Instruments Vantage Pro 2 Weather Station at the Carlisle Barracks helipad.

"This station is capable of reading and displaying real-time temperature; wind chill and heat index;

humidity; wind speed and direction; barometric pressure and trend; daily, monthly and annual rainfall; rain rate; UV index and dose; and also displays an up-to-date forecast," explained Jill Smith, CBRNE Operations Specialist at Carlisle Barracks.

The station, which has been operational for three months, is maintained by Installation Operations Center personnel, and is also used to give real time weather conditions to helicopter pilots landing at Carlisle Barracks.

The Vantage Pro 2 Weather Station Console records information about temperature, wind, rain, barometric pressure and more. Courtesy photo.

The post has also implemented numerous loudspeakers as part of its External Mass Notification System. With 10 to 15 speakers around post, and more going in at the Carlisle Barracks Golf Course, the Army Heritage and Education Center, and the new housing developments, all areas of post can be alerted in the event of an emergency, said Shughart.



The safety of Carlisle Barracks personnel is of the utmost importance to its leaders.

"Our primary focus is the Soldiers, families and civilians on our post, and keeping them safe," said Dickerson.

French commented on the importance of being ready for anything.

"It sends a strong message to your citizens and the Soldiers on this post, that you are doing your part in leadership to make sure you are prepared," he said.

What can you do to be ready?

For information about being prepared for emergencies, check out the following websites:

- <http://www.pema.state.pa.us/>

- <http://www.weather.gov/stormready/>

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 01 October 2008