



Spotlight On:

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AVAILABLE IN ALL SIZES

MPTIowa

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For MPTIowa, an Oskaloosa-based IT consulting firm, preparedness was a bit like the story of the shoemaker who was so busy that his son went barefoot. While MPTIowa helps its clients through all phases of IT, including disaster recovery and business continuity, it lacked a clear disaster recovery plan of its own. "We're always helping everyone else with disaster recovery plans, but needed to fully look at ourselves," explained the company's president, Jake Barnes.

Barnes started by using the disaster recovery and business continuity resources available on the Safeguard Iowa Partnership website. He determined what the company would do if it lost its main facility, then established alternate locations and developed plans to ensure essential functions would be restored.

Barnes and his administrative assistant, Ashley Sickels, looked at floor plans of their building and posted signs for evacuation routes and tornado safe areas. They looked at various scenarios, including an active shooter on the premises, and took additional steps, such as purchasing a complete first aid kit. "We're constantly trying to follow through and check off as many steps as we can," Barnes stressed. Friday lunches were a good time to train his staff and Sickels was the prime communicator to make sure information was effectively distributed.

The company also used the *20 Weeks to Preparedness* program, sponsored by Safeguard Iowa Partnership, as a benchmark plan, and encouraged its staff to complete the steps to protect their families by becoming better prepared at home. Reaction from employees has been very positive. "Everyone here is on board," Barnes said.

Barnes and Sickels understand that preparedness is an ongoing program. In the coming months the company plans to complete the preparedness cycle with hands-on exercises.

Conway

For the city of Conway, improving preparedness started early last year. Mayor Lacy Smith started the cycle with the help of Afton Police Chief, John Coulter, who came in and trained the city council along with neighboring council members and firefighters from surrounding towns in Taylor County, on the Incident Command System. Then this Taylor County town of 41 looked at other basic needs; for example, repairing its tornado siren.

"We talked about preparedness at the city council meetings," Smith explained. Like MPTIowa, they used the SIP website and focused on the *20 Weeks of Preparedness* campaign. "We distributed that information to council members so they would institute it with their families," Smith emphasized.

Smith has been the mayor since 2007, and has used her experience as a member of the county hospital's decontamination team to help prepare for a HAZMAT event. She understands the need for a preparedness plan for Conway, which went through disaster recovery after a tornado struck in the 1970s.

Smith, who also serves on the county emergency management board, is committed to the process. "We're working to put an emergency plan together," she said.

To learn more about joining Safeguard Iowa Partnership, visit www.safeguardiowa.org.



The Safeguard Iowa Partnership is a 501c3 nonprofit involving government, private-sector, higher education and nonprofit organizations. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of Iowa to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration.

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