

# PEPtalk

2ND QUARTER 2008



A Networking Organization of Professionals Involved In Planning For Emergencies And Disasters. [www.pepkc.org](http://www.pepkc.org)

## From The President

Dear PEP Members:

As my PEP Presidency quickly is coming to an end, I must convey my thanks to the board and all members for a very productive and rewarding year. The feedback received from the "PEP Bucks" launch has been very positive. This initiative is intended to provide additional membership incentive and recognition. We need you to be engaged by attending general sessions, offering to host a meeting, and writing or sharing articles and information of interest with other members through your contribution to this newsletter. We owe our appreciation to Adam Crowe, Linda DeTienne and Tom Munoz for their time and effort to develop this program. As if they had nothing else to do, Tom served as a steadfast Treasurer, Linda as an excellent Secretary and Adam anxiously waiting to step into the President role. I would like to thank Sarah Keever, Membership Chair, for learning a new database and the time required to keep track of us all. How could we function without having someone who happily greets and coordinates our meeting registration; thank you Dennis Largent for serving as our Hospitality Chair. Those of you that think our PEP web site is self sustained will forget that we need to thank Nick Crossley for his assistance. For those who were able to attend the March Crisis Communications seminar, we must thank Ronn Hennessy for presenter coordination. Alisa Pacer, Joyce Cheng, Steve Hannah, and Bill Latteman: thank you all for keeping the board focused, adding valuable input to board meetings and always promoting PEP's purpose and objectives. Last, to the reason you are reading this, to Jim Baird who has brought a new look and structure to a rather outdated newsletter, a thank you from us all.

In a recession the potential for disaster or business interruption does not lessen, but our budgets and resources become tighter. As we ride this roller coaster we are on the dip that means we must somehow work harder to justify business continuity programs and associated expenditures. It is so unfortunate that when we are not facing man-made or natural disasters that business contingency practices tend to become a management liability and expendable. A best practice for our industry is where we can identify the opportunities to build redundancy and mitigation into the daily infrastructure that enables a seamless continuity loop. I would encourage you to be engaged and self promote when you have these opportunities and never get discouraged.

Thank you to all for being the best you can be and always a professional!

Linda Linhoff, President

## PEP Meetings

May 8, 2008  
Board of Directors

May 15, 2008  
General Session  
**How to Integrate an After  
Action Review Process**

Swiss Re  
5200 Metcalf  
Overland Park, KS

June 12, 2008  
Board of Directors

July 10, 2008  
Board of Directors

July 17, 2008  
General Session  
**Emergency Notification**

## Inside PEPtalk

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## FAST FACTS ABOUT EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

The content of this article is from the Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN) newsletter: [www.disaster-survival.com](http://www.disaster-survival.com)

### Did you know...

- According to Gale Encyclopedia of Science, 800 tornadoes strike the United States each year, on average. In the U.S., tornadoes are responsible for about 80 deaths annually, 1500 injuries, and many millions of dollars in property damage. While it is still impossible to predict exactly when and where tornadoes will strike, progress has been made in predicting tornado development and detecting tornadoes with Doppler radar.
- Tornadoes are commonly associated with the nation's heartland - in a 10-state area stretching from Texas to Nebraska that also includes Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Arkansas, known as Tornado Alley. Yet tornadoes have occurred in all 50 U.S. states.
- While most Americans were pre-occupied with the Super Tuesday elections, 79 tornadoes-many with winds exceeding 200 mph-struck ten Southern states, killing nearly 60 people.
- Since February 2007, storm experts have been using the Enhanced Fujita Scale to measure the relative sizes of tornadoes. The original Fujita Scale was developed in 1971 by Tetsuya Fujita at the University of Chicago. Fujita developed his scale based on damage, not wind speeds. Based on the extent of damage conclusions are drawn as to what the winds would likely have to be to cause that type of damage. Since two wooden structured homes can be vastly different in quality and strength, there can be some misleading conclusions from the damage. Because of this and other overly general conclusions, storm researchers came up with the Enhanced Fujita Scale to better reflect a tornado's strength.
- According to Dr. Greg Forbes, Severe Weather Expert, the February 2008 outbreak was the largest February tornado outbreak on record (previous largest was in 1884) and third-deadliest. It was the deadliest tornado outbreak in the United States since May 31, 1985 when 76 people were killed in the United States (and 12 more in Canada). This year's outbreak included five tornadoes rated EF4 (1 in Arkansas, 2 in Tennessee, 2 in Alabama).
- Forbes noted the EF4 tornado in Arkansas in particular. It carved a continuous 123-mile damage path up to one-half mile wide. That is the longest path on record for that state and one of the longest in United States history. The longest known path was the Tri-State Tornado (MO-IL-IN) of March 18, 1925 which traveled at least 219 miles (some researchers now say at least 234 miles).
- Tornado Tim Baker, a famous tornado chaser, keeps the best statistics about past tornado locations and dates on his website. According to Baker, April is the month most likely to produce the most violent tornadoes, but May will most likely produce the most tornadoes. Between 1959 and 2004, 9527 tornadoes were recorded in 48 states during the month of May. Fifty-seven of these had a track length of greater than 50 miles. Tornadoes occurring in May have killed more than 600 people since 1959.
- Weather Radios manufactured by Midland Electronics and Oregon Scientific monitor alerts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. These radios can alert your organization to all kinds of emergencies, including tornadoes. They are especially useful for early tornado warnings. Once you input your regional code, you'll start receiving local warnings only - reducing false alarms.

## FAST FACTS continued

- Another early warning system is based on RDS (Radio Data System) technology which provides the ability to send text messages as part of an FM broadcast. Brevard County, Florida has installed this kind of system in all of their public schools.
- Knowing what to do after a tornado strikes makes the recovery effort easier, quicker and safer. Common hazards during the aftermath include downed power lines, gas leaks, and loose debris that could fall.

## Brain Teasers True or False

1. Tornadoes often occur when it is not raining.
2. Since tornadoes tend to move from northeast to southwest, the best place to shelter in a building is in the southwest corner.
3. Tornadoes are more likely to occur in spring or summer and between 3pm and 9pm.
4. If a tornado approaches your building, it is useful to open the windows to equalize the air pressure.
5. If you are in a high-rise building when a tornado approaches, you should go to the ground floor.

### Check your answers here...

1. **True.** In fact, in semiarid regions, that scenario is the rule rather than the exception. In these locales, tornadoes are associated with a powerful updraft, so rain does not fall in or next to a tornado. Very large hail, however, does fall in the immediate area of the tornado. In humid environments, rain often tends to wrap around the tornado, being pulled from the main precipitation area around the outside of the rotating updraft. The rain can make it difficult to see the tornado.
2. **False.** It used to be advised to go to the southwest corner for safety; however historical information has shown that any corner on the lowest level away from windows is as safe as any other corner. If tornado winds enter the room, debris has a tendency to collect in corners. When selecting a tornado "safe place," look for a place on the lowest level and away from windows, preferably in a small room. Closer walls will help provide more support to the roof, and each wall between you and the outside will provide further protection.
3. **True.** Tornadoes generally occur during spring and summer, but they can happen any time of the year. While tornadoes can occur at any time of the day or night, they are most likely to occur between 3:00 and 9:00 p.m. There are no areas immune to tornadoes; they have been reported in mountains and valleys, over deserts and swamps, from the Gulf Coast into Canada, in Hawaii and even Alaska. Regardless of the location or time of year, if conditions are right, a tornado can happen.
4. **False.** Air pressure differences in a tornado are not strong enough to cause a building to explode; structures are damaged by the violent winds associated with a tornado and from the debris blown at high velocities by tornado winds.
5. **False.** You may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Center hallways on any floor are often structurally the most reinforced part of a building.

## FAST FACTS continued

### Readiness Check **Hard-to-remember details:**

1. Strong winds frequently break weak limbs and hurl them at great speed, causing damage or injury when they hit. Do you regularly inspect your landscaping to prevent such occurrences?
2. If you have facilities in areas where tornadoes are likely to occur, do your plans address actions to take if the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Watch or Tornado Warning?
3. Does your equipment inventory include early warning technology, and have you learned about your community's early warning plans?
4. Do you have a designated Tornado Shelter in facilities that are likely to be hit by a tornado?
5. Do your plans describe actions to take during the aftermath of a tornado?

### New from DSPN **Check these out on our website:**

- Attending the Continuity Insights Conference in New Orleans this year? DSPN is staging a post-conference workshop at the conference hotel on May 8. [Click here for more details.](#)
- DSPN can provide a customized tabletop exercise at your site that will be very engaging for your executive team.
- Get your free Tornado Safety Guide.

Paul Klier / DSPN Newsletter  
[www.disaster-survival.com](http://www.disaster-survival.com)

On March 13, 2008, PEP presented a workshop on crisis communications. Recently the Wall Street Journal published an article that dovetails in with the workshop's topic: "Dealing With a PR Crisis Takes Planning and Truth." You may access the full article on-line at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120610875887954827.html>

## The PEP Board Extends Their Appreciation

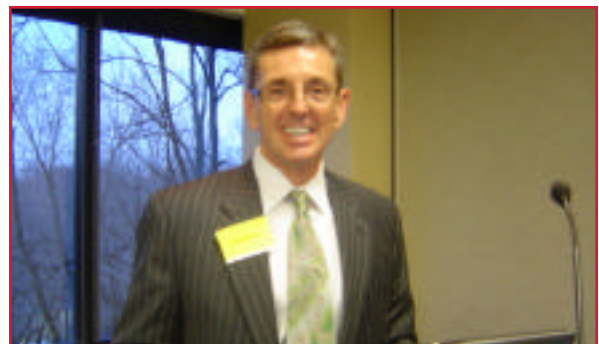
The PEP Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for your PEP Membership.

As a Board, we attempt to focus on ways to increase benefits to members such as informational resources, educational opportunities, web site information, quarterly newsletters, networking opportunities and more.

### As a member, you benefit from:

- PEP Website – [www.pepkc.org](http://www.pepkc.org) – listing upcoming meetings and events, as well as sharing information from previous presentations.
- Expanded newsletter that is distributed via e-mail to members
- Networking among members who represent the public and private sectors, and corporations and organizations
- Increased range of subjects covered in general membership meetings
- Special workshops and seminars
- PEP Bucks – a program rewarding attendance and involvement with PEP Branded items
- Membership dues among the lowest of any non-profit organization: just \$50 per year. And up to five employees from the same company and operating out of the same business address may join under the one \$50 membership fee.

We look forward to serving you and making PEP an organization that provides excellent services to its members. Let us know how we can be of benefit to you.



## Of Interest . . . Upcoming Severe Weather Season

I've received numerous questions over the last few weeks regarding the possible severity of the upcoming severe weather season. First, there is no way to predict what kind of severe weather season we will get. I can tell you scientifically that we have little to no skill in predicting the "severity" of the severe weather season in this region.

Flooding is a little different. First off the remaining snow pack is nothing extraordinary up stream in the Missouri river basin, unlike that in the Mississippi river basin. However as you are likely well aware, soils are saturated from our wet winter and early spring storms. Even our modest 1-2 inch rainfall amounts overnight have produced some minor river flooding south of the KC metro area today. Also, the precipitation outlook for April is for a slightly higher chance for above normal precipitation, than normal or below normal precipitation.

See:

[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi\\_season/13\\_seasonal\\_outlooks/color/page2.gif](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/page2.gif)

The upper right map shows the slightly better chance for above normal precipitation in April.

However looking at the lower right map, it shows that the three month precipitation outlook for April, May, and June shows "EC" for us, which means equal chances for above normal, normal, or below normal precipitation. Essentially, you can't, with any reasonable or repeatable skill predict what these three months will have in store for us.

To summarize, the seasonal severe weather risk is anybody's guess. Flooding-wise, as long as our soils are saturated, we've got an above normal flood potential; however I would stop well short of predicting 1993-like flooding. We've got a long ways to go to achieve that level of flooding.

Hope this helps answer some questions. Also, please feel free to contact us at any time for clarification, or any other questions you may have.

Andy Bailey  
National Weather Service

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### Call for Newsletter Articles

The partnership for  
Emergency Planning  
Board of Directors  
would like to invite all  
members to submit  
articles for publication  
in the quarterly PEP  
Newsletter. This  
newsletter is circulated  
to over 200 PEP  
members representing  
over 100 companies  
and government  
agencies in the Kansas  
City Metro area.

You can submit articles  
from other publications  
(with author permission)  
or write about a recent  
exercise, lessons learned  
in continuity/ disaster  
planning, or other  
general areas of interest  
to private and public  
continuity and  
emergency managers.

The articles should be  
250-500 words in length  
and submitted via email.  
You may also include  
a short profile of your-  
self and company that  
will be included with  
the article.

If you are interested  
in submitting an article  
or would like more  
information, please  
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