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D. Blair Camp
Mayor

mayor@murray.utah.gov

801-264-2600

The Time to Prepare is Now

The unusual events of 2020 continue to serve as a reminder of the importance of emergency preparation. The pandemic had many people evaluating the need for a supply of essential goods and food. The earthquake reminded us of the need for emergency kits, emergency plans, emergency power sources, braced water heaters, and so on. Extreme heat and lack of rain contributed to wildfires. Each of us has needed a cool place to rest and recover from the heat this summer. The recent windstorms that battered the Wasatch Front caused damage to many homes and resulted in multiple power outages, some extended to five days and beyond, and emphasized the need to have a contingency plan in place in case of prolonged outages.

These incidents during the past months have reminded me how vulnerable we are as individuals, yet how resilient we are as a community. Helping our neighbors in time of need is something that we are good at, but we need to plan to be prepared to meet our own needs as much as possible, and then be prepared to help our neighbors. The city has a limited emergency management staff to help navigate the complex State and Federal processes, and although the city will help where it can, individuals should not plan to rely upon the city in an emergency. The key to dealing with life's unexpected events is preparation. Roger Maris once said, "you hit home runs not by chance, but by preparation."

How we each prepare will depend on our individual needs and circumstances. Battery powered lights are always a good idea to have on hand, but the batteries need to be checked on a regular basis. It may make sense for you to own a generator for keeping your refrigerator or freezer running in the event of a power outage, while others may make plans for family or friends to take food or bring in dry ice. Some may plan to evacuate when needed, while others may need assistance in evacuating. Some may need to plan for the care of their pets, while others do not. The point is that one size does not fit all, but what is universal is the need to have a plan!

You may be asking "how do I make a plan?" There are many helpful resources available to the public to assist in a preparedness plan. The Ready.gov website (<https://www.ready.gov>) is a good resource for general preparedness information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The "Make a Plan" tab is a good starting point for anyone. The American Red Cross (<https://www.redcross.org>) has many tips and resources for emergency



preparedness. The “Be Ready Utah” site (<https://www.utah.gov/beready>) is the emergency preparedness resource for the State of Utah. It contains helpful content and links in developing your emergency plan. And finally, our Murray City website (<https://murray.utah.gov/1174/Emergency-Preparedness>) has information on local resources for emergency planning including the Murray Family Emergency Handbook. In addition to these government resources, there are neighborhood groups and faith-based organizations to assist individuals and families in being prepared.

We can see that there are no shortages of resources to help plan, so the next step is to do it! Whether you are making a new plan from scratch or dusting off and updating an old plan, the important thing is to do it! When the next unusual event strikes, will you have a plan? When the emergency hits, the time for planning and preparation has passed. Let's be prepared to help ourselves, which in turn will enable us to help others during times of crisis.