



Kingman County Commission

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Severe Weather Awareness highlighted next week

Snow probably is still the weather on most people's minds but it also is time to prepare for the spring severe storm season.

This year's Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 2-6. The statewide Tornado Safety Drill will be held at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 3. Sirens will sound throughout Kingman County at that time in conjunction with the test, unless severe weather is imminent.

Now is the perfect time to practice your existing tornado safety drill or to come up with a plan if you don't already have one. Knowing where you will go ahead of time in case of a severe weather event is crucial in protecting your safety and your life.

This also is a good time to go through your disaster kits and update any outdated supplies. If you do not have a kit, putting one together is easy. Your kit should include a three-day supply of water, non-perishable food, blankets, flashlights, a whistle, paper products and other day-to-day items. Learn more about assembling a kit by going to ksready.gov and clicking on the "Prepare Today" link.

Last year the big weather news in south central Kansas was the lack of severe weather. Kingman County did not record a single tornado.

"We did have several hail and wind events, along with a somewhat large snow event early in the year," said Fred Simon, the county's emergency manager. "Rain came late in the summer that even led to a little localized flooding, hard to believe in the middle of a drought."

According to the National Weather Service, 40 tornadoes hit the state in 2014, about 40 fewer than the 30-year average of 80 and the fewest since 1989. There were 27 tornado-related injuries reported, but no fatalities. The first tornado was reported April 2; the last was on Dec. 14, a reminder that tornadoes can strike any time of the year. The most tornadoes in one day occurred May 11 when nine tornadoes were reported in the state.

In addition, the National Weather Service has declared March 4 as National Flood Awareness Day.

Weather affects our daily lives, influencing how we dress and how we work and play. Weather can change quickly and preparation is the key.

"The more we can mitigate for the effects it has on us, the less chance we will have of becoming a victim to it," said Simon.

More information on severe weather preparedness is posted on the emergency management page of the county's website, kingmancoks.com.

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