

Getting Georgia Ready with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency

Overview

Ready Georgia is a statewide campaign designed to educate and empower Georgians to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, pandemic outbreaks, potential terrorist attacks and other large-scale emergencies. The campaign is a project of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and provides a local dimension to *Ready America*, a broader national campaign. *Ready Georgia* aims to prepare citizens for maintaining self-sufficiency for at least 72 hours following an emergency.

Objectives

Cookerly Public Relations was charged with creating and executing a communications program to create the brand for a statewide emergency preparedness campaign, launch and build awareness of the campaign, and inspire Georgians to be prepared and put together their own ready kit.

Strategy & Tactics

Cookerly Public Relations designed a marketing plan focused on media relations, creative collateral development and a new Web site. Tactical elements include:

- **Research** – Cookerly leveraged and reviewed existing/secondary research available at the national and other local levels through the *Ready* campaign. We created and conducted a statewide phone survey to set baseline awareness of emergency preparedness as well as test three Georgia taglines.
- **Campaign Theme** - The national *Ready* campaign has a lot of professional and effective messages and materials behind it. To leverage current branding, we decided to build on the existing national campaign to minimize confusion in the target audiences, some of whom were likely to be aware of the national campaign.
- **Messaging and Media Outreach Plan** - Using the data collected from the baseline assessment measures, the agency developed a targeted, strategic marketing plan that reaches all target audiences and helps to move Georgians along the pathway from awareness to action.
- **Media Relations** - To prepare for rollout of the *Ready Georgia* campaign, Cookerly created a print and online press kit. The agency also reached out to meteorologists. Since so many of Georgia's disasters are weather-related and research has shown that most people watch the news primarily to get the weather, this is a key media audience for engagement. We sent a media teaser specifically for the meteorologists, which included a media calendar and candy to celebrate "Meteorologist Day."



Highlights

Preliminary researched ensured the campaign reached target audiences.

15 speaking engagements in the first year spread the emergency preparedness message to business and neighborhood associations and more.

More than 80 placements were secured in the first six months including *Associated Press*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Georgia Public Broadcasting, *Georgia Magazine*, FOX 5, CBS 46, NBC 41 and more.



- **Events and Promotions** - The launch of the *Ready Georgia* campaign was held at the state capitol and led by the Governor to tie in with the Severe Weather Awareness Week proclamation signing. We invited kids from a local school to provide more visual impact as well as secured "Rex," the *Ready Kids* mascot to participate and interact with kids and media. In addition, The Home Depot agreed to in-store ready displays, ready checklists and a charitable giving program. The Home Depot and *Ready Georgia* also collaborated on a Ready kit scavenger hunt at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens to teach local children about the need to prepare.
- **Speaking Engagements** - The agency developed a presentation for use in speaking to neighborhood associations, women's groups, business associations and other groups to get the word out and engage communities in the program. In addition to providing these tools in the online toolkit, we have secured 15 engagements in the first year on behalf of the campaign. We created an online toolkit for interested community leaders and emergency management agency directors so that they can carry the campaign in their areas.
- **Web Site Development** - Cookerly created and launched www.ready.ga.gov to connect GEMA's leadership on this issue to the national campaign and provide local information and resources to Georgians.

Results

Only six months into Cookerly's media relations efforts, the agency had secured more than 80 media placements across print, broadcast and online outlets. Coverage included the *Associated Press*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Georgia Public Broadcasting, *Georgia Magazine*, FOX 5, CBS 46, NBC 41 and more, resulting in well over 19 million media impressions.

Program urges Georgians to be prepared

Insurance commissioner also offers weather advice

From Staff and Wire Reports

ATLANTA — Gov. Sonny Perdue has announced a statewide campaign Monday to help Georgians prepare for a large-scale disaster.

The Ready Georgia program will be led by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. Perdue unveiled the campaign during a ceremony proclaiming Feb. 29 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in Georgia.

The Ready Georgia campaign is designed to educate and engage Georgians to "think, prepare and act" in advance of natural and man-made disasters and provides a local dimension to Ready America, a broader national campaign.

Colquitt County Emergency Management Agency Director Russell Moody said the campaign will encourage residents to be prepared for a disaster. The best way to be prepared for a disaster is to have a relief kit with all the basic supplies, such as non-perishable food and water, a first aid kit and batteries, he said.

The campaign aims to prepare citizens for maintaining self-sufficiency for at least 72 hours following an emergency.

Also in light of Severe Weather Awareness Week, state Insurance Commissioner John Owendine has reminded homeowners of some important insurance tips to protect their property from tornadoes, flooding and other weather-related hazards.

While tornadoes can occur at any time of year if atmospheric conditions are right, Owendine said March, April and May are considered prime months for tornadoes to strike.

"Georgia's tornado season is just around the corner," Owendine said, "and we want all Georgia consumers to be familiar with steps they should take to minimize property damage and financial hardship caused by storms."

Owendine offers these reminders and tips:

On the Net
American Red Cross:
<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster>
Georgia Insurance Commissioner:
www.gainsurance.org

- While a standard homeowner's insurance policy covers damage from high winds and tornadoes, it does not cover damage from flooding. A separate policy must be purchased through the National Flood Insurance Program, and can only be purchased if your community participates in the national program. However, a standard mobile home policy can cover damage caused by floods. Check your policy.
- Make a list of all valuables, furniture, electronics, etc., and photos insurance commissioner Owendine said. Keep copies of the list, photographs and videotape in a safe place outside your home. If your home is damaged or destroyed in a natural disaster, it may be difficult for you to tell your insurance agent what you lost without proof.
- Keep your insurance policy numbers and your agent's phone number in a safe place as well.
- If disaster strikes, contact your agent or insurance company immediately.
- Protect your property from further damage. For example, if your roof is damaged, cover it with a tarp to prevent water damage from subsequent rains. Most policies will not cover such damage.
- Make sure you understand the difference between actual cash value (ACV) and replacement cost coverage for your contents, and obtain the coverage that best suits your needs. An ACV policy replaces contents at cost minus depreciation. If you have replacement cost coverage, your contents will be replaced at today's prices.
- If you have questions about property insurance, you may call a representative of Owendine's Consumer Services Division at (404) 656-2079 or toll free at 1-800-656-2066.