



# **Public Relations Plan Medford Emergency Management**

**Fall 2013, Winter 2014, Spring 2014**

Heather Yount • School of Journalism and Communication  
Erica Ciscek • Instructor • Strategic Communications Research • Fall 2013  
Pat Curtin • Professor • Strategic Planning and Cases • Winter 2014  
Margy Parker • Instructor • Public Relations Campaigns • Spring 2014





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## About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

## About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and one city in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with the partner city on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner city through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future.

## SCI Directors and Staff

Nico Larco, SCI Co-Director and Associate Professor of Architecture

Marc Schlossberg, SCI Co-Director and Associate Professor of Planning, Public Policy, and Management

Bob Choquette, Sustainable City Year Program Manager

## About City of Medford

Medford, located in Jackson County in Southern Oregon's Rogue Valley, has a population of 75,920 within a metropolitan statistical area of 206,310 people, the 4th largest in the state. The City was founded in 1883 at its present site because of its proximity to Bear Creek and the Oregon and California Railroad, becoming the County seat in 1927.

The downtown is a National Historic District and it is flourishing today due to support from the City's Urban Renewal Agency in cooperation with business and property owners. New construction, building restorations, infrastructure improvements and community events are creating a forward-looking downtown grounded in its diverse past. Streets have been realigned and improved with with new pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Medford is the economic center for a region of over 460,000 people in Southern Oregon and Northern California. In the past, its economy was fueled by agriculture and lumber products. Although the lumber industry has declined, three lumber mills, Boise Cascade, Timber Products and Sierra Pine, remain. The area also is home to an expanding vineyard and wine industry that includes a large assortment of varietals and over 60 wineries. Lithia Motors, the 9th largest auto retailer in the U.S., has been headquartered in Medford since 1970.

The City is a regional hub for medical services. Two major medical centers employ over 7,000 people in the region. Medford is also a retirement destination, with senior housing, assisted living and other elder care services acting as an important part of the economy.

The Bear Creek Greenway extends from Ashland through central Medford and includes a 26-mile multi-use path, linking several cities and numerous parks. Roxy Ann Peak, one of Medford's most prominent landmarks, is a 3,573-foot dormant volcano located on the east side in Prescott Park, Medford's largest city park at 1,740 acres.

## Course Participants

*Dallas Abraham, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Brooke Bonime, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Emily Bradach, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Kimberly Chin, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Elizabeth Emery, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Olivia Gust, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Madison Hall, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Shaina Hayutin, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Hannah Holden, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Adam Jacobs, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Cody Karlin, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Nellie Maher, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Meredith Morrell, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Kathleen Nguyen, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Tory Opsahl, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Shiela Peralta, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Tea Ribar, Public Relation Undergraduate*

*Jaimi Riedl, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Ashley Roberts, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Carly Ruben-Stahr, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Jessica Stancil, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Julia Vipiana, Public Relations Undergraduate*

*Lindsey Wallach, Public Relations Undergraduate*

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*This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon’s Sustainable City Year Program for the City of Medford. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon.*



## Introduction

This report is the result of three terms of work by students in the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication. During fall term 2013, students in Strategic Communications Research (J495) conducted primary and secondary research to learn more about issues related to Medford Emergency Management. In winter term 2014, students in Strategic Planning and Cases (J453) used the research conducted in J495 to identify strategic communications issues. In spring term 2014, Public Relations Campaigns (J454) students developed a public relations campaign designed to assist Medford Emergency Management in addressing identified communications issues. Research: Fall 2013



# Research: Fall 2013

## Background

The city of Medford is the largest city in Jackson County, located in southwestern Oregon. According to the latest United States Census, Medford is home to approximately 75,000 full-time residents, but 150,000 people occupy Medford during the daytime hours because of daily commuters. The education system includes three high schools, two middle schools, and 14 elementary schools, along with three charter schools. In addition, the city is also home to two post-secondary schools, two hospitals, an airport, and a local public transit system.

One important piece of an efficient emergency preparedness strategy is an Emergency Operations Plan. An Emergency Operations Plan is a “steady-state” policy maintained by various jurisdictional levels for responding to a wide variety of potential hazards (Jackson County Emergency Operations Plan). The City of Medford Emergency Operations Plan identifies four phases of emergency management. These phases include mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Response is the primary focus of the Emergency Operations Plan, and includes provision of emergency services during a crisis to “reduce casualties and damage and speed recovery.”

Emergency preparedness efforts in Medford are a pressing topic. Living near the Cascadia subduction zone, residents in Medford should be concerned about the possibility of it triggering a large earthquake in the near future. Geographically, if an earthquake or other natural disaster were to occur and cause highways and bridges to collapse, Medford would be isolated. Both of the hospitals in the city are located on one side of the river; therefore, if all the bridges collapse, a makeshift bridge would need to be constructed to provide citizens access to the hospitals.

Every community in the United States must be part of a comprehensive plan in accordance with The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), enabling communities to prepare and respond to emergencies. The City of Medford’s Emergency Operations Plan is already defined, but not developed, for citizens at the community level. Having an effective emergency preparedness strategy goes beyond having an Emergency Operations Plan.

Our client representative, Glenda Wilson, Assistant to the City Manager, hopes to build awareness of emergency preparedness in the event of a natural disaster or similar emergency situation. In the planning phases, the city has divided its general population into targeted segments, including local schools; businesses and the local chamber of commerce; elderly citizens; and visitors to Medford. The city aims to develop an outreach plan that is intelligent, innovative, and comprehensible.

The goal of this project is to identify successful methods and develop an implementation plan to address education and outreach to businesses and residents in the city of Medford. This report addresses how Medford's emergency management efforts can educate its residents.

## Situational Analysis

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 31 percent of Medford's population is under the age of 18. School-aged students are a primary audience that the City of Medford hopes to address in its emergency awareness outreach. In the event of an emergency or disaster, students must be informed and aware of the necessary steps to take to remain safe. In addition, teachers, parents, and school officials serve as vital resources for students; these individuals should also be prepared to serve as leaders and educators in the area of emergency preparedness.

Currently, the school district has regular emergency drills (e.g., fire drills and earthquake drills) that allow students to practice proper protocol. In addition, Medford once hosted a Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program, but it was unsuccessful due to staffing limitations and was eventually shutdown. The school district website does not provide in-depth information on emergency procedures and policies.

According to the official website for City of Medford Fire-Rescue, the most recent version of the Emergency Management Plan was updated in October 1999 and focuses on hazard mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. As this was 15 years ago, this plan needs to be updated to focus on the current concerns of Medford residents and visitors. Until approximately 2007, the Fire Department managed the Emergency Operations Center and was the lead on emergency management.

Efforts to develop CERT have come to a standstill as of this writing, as only 24 volunteers have been certified. CERT trains only selected citizens, which means that not all citizens are educated on how to help themselves and others in the case of an emergency or how to prevent crises ("Medford CERT," 2012.)

In case of emergency, first-responders would be overwhelmed. The Medford Police Department employs 103 police officers, 33 civilian employees and 30 volunteers ("City of Medford Police Department," 2010.) City of Medford Fire-Rescue, with five fire stations, has a workforce of 82 to respond to crises ("CMPD," 2010.) With over 1,500 small and large businesses in the City of Medford, and about 150,000 people during the day, the number of residents and employees outweighs the number of Police and Fire workers by about 600 to 1 ("Medford/Jackson County Chamber of Commerce," 2013).

Medford already has an in-depth informational packet explaining how to prepare for and what to do in case of an emergency available to its general population. However, this packet is dense and unappealing to school-age citizens. The packet solely focuses on the needs of individual residences and businesses. Medford has established the Emergency Coordination Center, which has the capability of coordinating all human-made or natural disasters that may occur within the city. The center currently operates the Citizens Hotline and backup 911-dispatch services. Additionally, the existence of Medford's Citizen Alert Program allows local officials to provide residents with critical information quickly through texts and emails in a variety of situations (City of Medford).

## **Secondary Research**

### **Medford School District Information**

The Medford School District website does not provide specific information on how schools stay prepared for emergencies or disasters, but does offer a link to the Medford Elementary Schools Parent Handbook, which provides some detail for the 14 elementary schools in the district. The handbook includes a one-page section on emergency, evacuation and security drills, along with what parents can do in case of an emergency.

The school district compiled a lengthy manual that contains emergency policies, plans, and procedures. The manual documents a variety of emergencies, including fires, earthquakes, school shootings, and similar events. Medford School District's plan has been noted as one of the top four emergency preparedness plans in the State of Oregon. However, this documentation is not readily available through the school district's website.

All schools in the district are required to hold a variety of practice emergency drills throughout the school year. These practice drills are seen as vital training for both faculty and students. Schools practice fire and earthquake drills at least once during the school year. Lockdown drills are held at least three times a year. The school district has implemented two distinct types of lockdown drills to combat various levels of danger. The first is a precautionary lockdown, in which all outside doors of a school building are locked. The second is a direct threat lockdown, in which all outside doors are locked, along with all classroom doors. The various lockdown drills each year address both types of lockdowns to help students and staff prepare for both emergencies. To view a complete list of interview questions, see Appendix A.

## **Medford Residents**

Citizens in Medford assume that in times of emergency, the city will be there to help them. This phenomenon is not specific to Medford; it can be seen all over the country. In a 2009 survey by FEMA's Citizen Corps on the emergency preparedness of people in the United States, 61 percent of respondents said that during the first 72 hours of a disaster they would expect to rely on fire, police and emergency personnel ("Personal Preparedness in America," 2009, p. 3). In a real emergency, however, this will not be possible. Emergency personnel will be helping their own families. The citizens of Medford need to be informed that they will have to rely on each other if an emergency occurs, and they need to be ready to do so.

## **Youth and Emergency Preparedness**

Youths are an important demographic to reach to raise awareness about emergency preparedness. By educating young adults about how to respond to emergencies, they will be able to disseminate this important message to their families. Using the same content and format as the adult CERT program sponsored by FEMA's Citizen Corps program, the Lincoln County School District in Oregon "has developed a Teen CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) class for high school students that trains teens in disaster preparedness and response skills" (U.S. Department of Education). Students are able to take this course for credit, and as a result will learn either how to assist in the event of a large-scale emergency, until professional responders arrive on the scene, or in the event that responders are unable to assist. The first class took place in January 2010.

Based on the experience of the Lincoln County School District, funds are needed to keep the program operating following a small amount of initial investment. Start-up costs include classroom-training supplies such as backpack kits with flashlights, vests, and protective safety gear as well as the cost of training for teachers. The FEMA Teen CERT page offers various resources including a brochure and guide to launching and maintaining Teen CERT training (FEMA). While the Teen CERT program was a success in Lincoln County, acceptance in Medford would require an interest and willingness of community members to implement it in the school district.

## **CERT Program**

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a concept that a city can use to strengthen its emergency preparedness strategy at a community level. CERT was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Further, it

confirmed the need for training civilians to meet their immediate needs. As a result, the LAFD created the Disaster Preparedness Division with the purpose of training citizens and government employees (CERT Los Angeles).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) believes that CERT programs are applicable to all hazards and that “the training program that LAFD initiated furthers the process of citizens understanding their responsibility in preparing for disaster. It also increases their ability to safely help themselves, their family, and their neighbors” (FEMA). While FEMA understands that community members will inherently help one another in emergencies, many casualties can be saved through training. The example is given of the Mexico City Earthquake where untrained volunteers saved 800 people on the spot, but 100 people lost their lives while attempting to save others (FEMA).

### **City of Medford**

The City of Medford does have a generalized emergency plan for citizens and the community, though available resources are general and provide broad information. Fire-Rescue has established an emergency management program that includes an emergency plan, a management planning committee, an emergency coordination center and CERT program. The Fire-Rescue website also offers a selection of additional online resources with information on disasters and self-help (Disaster Management).

Additionally, the City of Medford website offers a 45-page emergency preparedness guide and family workbook to help educate its citizens on how to prepare for a disaster. This guide is located online but is very difficult to find and not easily accessible for people looking for information. This guide offers very detailed information, covering every type of disaster and defining significant terms. It includes a step-by-step guide on how to manage all types of emergencies, as well as a thorough checklist for supplies and an area for families to fill in information and create a personal plan (Emergency Preparedness Guide). Although the information is useful, it is also overwhelming since it is a large packet covering a wide range of topics in very specific detail. The packet could be condensed to be more effective as a reference for citizens.

### **Research Results**

A survey was conducted in downtown Medford in the fall of 2013. The surveyors interviewed 61 participants regarding their knowledge of the CERT program. The data showed only 27 percent of participants 30 and younger had heard of the Community Emergency Response Team, with three out of 11 people answering “yes.” On the other hand, 70% of those surveyed over the age of 30 had heard of the CERT program, with 35 out of 50 people who answered “yes.”

Surveyors asked participants to rate their preparedness level on a scale from one to ten as an individual, and then to rate the preparedness level of the Medford community as a whole. The data concluded that 40 of the 61 participants (65%) felt moderately to highly prepared for an emergency as an individual. However, when asked to rank Medford's preparedness level as a community, only 21 of the 61 people (34%) surveyed felt moderately to highly prepared.

Lastly, surveyors asked how interested participants were in participating in a CERT certification class based on the existing knowledge of the program. The most common level of interest was disinterest, with 21 people ranking their interest level at either a one or two.

A second survey was conducted to determine the types of training Medford's employees have received and areas of emergency preparedness where they felt they lacked knowledge. This survey consisted of 27 questions, and was distributed to Medford employees via e-mail by Glenda Wilson. The data demonstrated the majority of supervisors required some training for their employees, as 11 of the 12 survey respondents stated their department introduced emergency preparedness training of some kind to them. This survey revealed the most common forms of emergency preparedness training employees felt they were lacking was hazard specific preparedness, maintaining and practicing a plan, water rationing/treatment, and food storage.

The third survey was conducted via e-mail in fall of 2013. Participants included Medford city officials, local businesses, the medical community, and schools within the Medford School District. This survey consisted of 13 questions and garnered 84 responses. The majority of respondents were within the ages of 18–24 and 45–64, of which 24 percent were commuters and not Medford residents. When asked to respond to the following statement, "The citizens of Medford can adequately respond to some natural disasters that could occur in the community," 53 percent of respondents agreed with the message. However, only 9 percent agreed with the statement "The citizens of Medford can adequately respond to all natural disasters that could occur in the community."

When asked about their eagerness to learn more about emergency preparedness, 65 percent of respondents stated they would take initiative to educate themselves if the information was made more readily available. Of all the potential natural disasters, 59 percent of participants were most concerned about the possibility of an earthquake. When asked about communication during an emergency, 72 percent of respondents stated a text message would be the preferred method of communication, while 26 percent stated radio or television news broadcast is preferred.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the research conducted, the biggest challenge Medford faces is communicating and promoting emergency preparedness information to parents

and the Medford community. The primary question remains: how can Medford share this educational and essential information with students, parents and the residents of Medford?

First, it is recommended that emergency preparedness plans and policies be available on each school's website, as well as the school district's website. This information is most effective if it is presented in a concise, downloadable document. The document should include where parents can be reunited with their children following an emergency, where the children will be during every kind of emergency and the steps that will be taken in schools during emergencies.

To address the various levels of computer access and communication preferences, this information packet should also be available in printed form. Each household with children enrolled in the district should be given a packet at the start of each school year. It is also recommended that the school district host at least one parent-teacher workshop during the school year to provide an opportunity for parents to ask detailed questions regarding their children's safety and highlight the updated web resources available to parents and the community.

Another recommendation is to implement an emergency preparedness plan throughout the business community of Medford. There are three suggested steps to achieving this: 1) Medford can organize a large campaign centered on National Preparedness Month; 2) the CERT program could be expanded; and 3) establish a social media presence for purpose of distributing emergency alerts. September is National Preparedness Month, which is a great opportunity to create a campaign effort to improve awareness of emergency preparedness in Medford. The month of September 2015 can be designated for a variety of events and programs. Medford should collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce to kick off Medford's National Preparedness Month events with a training conference for local businesses. Business owners could be invited to attend workshops at this event detailing how to train employees on emergency preparedness.

One workshop idea revolves around creating a Business Continuity Plan. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers a great resource for this on its website. A Business Continuity Plan is crucial because research shows only about 40 percent of businesses will re-open after a disaster. With a plan, businesses will most likely be prepared for re-opening, but many businesses may be intimidated by the idea of having to create a plan. A workshop would help make the planning process simpler by providing business owners with resources and a template. In addition to workshops, at the conference, businesses will receive packets with additional information and materials to distribute among employees.

It is recommended Medford create an official Emergency Preparedness Facebook page and Twitter account. The purpose of these would be to allow city officials to post regular updates on local happenings, tips and other safety information for the public.

Social media should be an ongoing project for Medford's emergency management because it will help citizens be more informed before disasters. In the event of an emergency, if phone and internet service are unaffected, it will allow citizens to receive and share the latest news. The value of being able to post a video, photo, or piece of news is undeniable. This will allow the city to promote National Preparedness Month online, as well as ask citizens for input and feedback about the CERT program and other events and programs, such as the conference in September. Text messages are also a preferred method of alerts among Medford citizens. The City of Medford should also implement a text alert system to communicate information about emergencies to citizens.

Lastly, secondary research highlighted the effectiveness of emergency calendars implemented by Clackamas County. Medford should create emergency calendars that provide tips for homeowners to prepare themselves for seasonally appropriate disasters, including floods in winter months and fires in summer months.



# Strategic Plan: Winter 2014

## Core Challenge and Opportunity

Medford is at risk of experiencing natural disasters, and families are likely unprepared if an emergency were to occur. Emergency preparedness awareness will create an understanding of the importance for citizens to be informed about what to do during a natural or manmade crisis, which is crucial for keeping the citizens of Medford safe during a disaster.

## Goal

Increase enrollment in the Medford CERT program by June 2015 and re-establish emergency preparedness practices in Medford schools.

## Target Audiences

### Primary

*Medford Youth, grades K-12*

According to an article on motivation by Forbes, studies suggest there are four key ways to motivate students in the academic realm. The first involves competency, whether or not the student feels as if they can complete the task at hand. Second, young adults like to see a direct connection between their efforts and outcome. Third, students enjoy tasks of personal value or interest to themselves. And finally, if students perceive a social reward, such as a sense of belonging or group approval, they are more likely to engage in it (Crotty 2013).

Offering CERT training to high school students will enable this audience to be prepared for an emergency. Offering the class for credit serves as an incentive to high school students to participate in CERT training because it can help fulfill graduation requirements.

Beyond offering a Teen CERT training course at local high schools, you can reach this demographic through social media. According to a survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, together with Harvard's Berkman Center, 94 percent of teen social media users have a Facebook account. In 2011, Twitter was used by 12 percent of teens but this number more than doubled in 2012, to 26 percent. This indicates that adoption rates for this platform are quickly increasing. By using social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to promote the CERT program, it will increase awareness among this demographic.

*Hispanic Population*

The Hispanic population is the largest minority group in Medford. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 11.8 percent Medford residents speak a language other than English at home. Therefore, we can infer that the likelihood of that percentage speaking Spanish is high. Through offering the CERT training program in Spanish, the Hispanic community has the opportunity to participate in emergency preparedness education.

Religion is deeply rooted in the lives of Hispanic Americans. In the United States, 70 percent of the Latino population is Catholic, and 23 percent identify as Protestant or another Christian affiliation (Latino Religion in the U.S.). The church influences family life and places an emphasis on the importance of community (Ohio State University Fact Sheet). Family ties are also very strong, and conserving the Spanish language is important in many households. In Oregon, 70 percent of Hispanics speak a language other than English at home (Demographic Profile of Hispanics in Oregon). Furthermore, educational efforts are better received and accepted by this population when “community leaders are involved in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of these educational efforts” (Ohio State University Fact Sheet).

#### *Medical Personnel*

Our key public to promote and revitalize the CERT program is medical personnel within the Medford community. This includes doctors and nurses, but also support staff such as clerical or maintenance workers. This group is key to the restoration of the CERT program because it has trusted leaders among the city of Medford.

Three of the six largest employers in Medford are in the medical field. Together, Asante, Providence Medford Medical Center, and Rogue Valley Medical Center account for more than 7,000 employees in Medford. This public includes the organizational leaders of these three businesses as well as the medical professionals who work for them. In the event of a crisis, community members would seek medical professionals as reliable sources for help. To best prepare the community, we want these medical professionals to be prepared for the responsibility that will be expected of them. Medical training alone is not enough to prepare for a crisis. CERT training provides disaster preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, and disaster psychology.

#### **Intervening Publics**

##### *Local media*

The media will serve to alert the Medford public of the restoration of CERT. Newspaper, television, print publications and online spaces are a way to inform the public.

Medford has several local platforms for traditional media. The City’s main print media source is the Medford Mail Tribune, a daily newspaper that serves

all of Jackson County. The Mail Tribune is owned by the Southern Oregon Media group, which also circulates nearby Ashland's paper, the Ashland Daily Tidings, as well as smaller specialized papers like The Nickel, a consumer and classifieds paper (Medford Mail Tribune). The local community college, Rogue Community College, also has a student-run newspaper called Byline (Medford Newspapers).

The City of Medford has six local TV stations that broadcast local news coverage:

- KTVL News 10
- FOX 26
- KOB-TV
- KDRV-TV
- KMOV
- KSYS

There are also six FM and two AM local radio stations that serve Medford and the greater Southern Oregon area:

- KDOV 91.7 The Dove
- KEZX 730 Fox Sports Radio Medford
- KBOY 95.7 FM Classic Rock
- KLDR 98
- KMED 1440 Medford's AM Station
- KLDZ 103.5 KOOL FM
- KTMT 93.7 NOW FM
- The Rogue New Rock 96.9

Residents of Medford can also find news and information on the City's official website, [ci.medford.or.us](http://ci.medford.or.us), and the Medford Chamber of Commerce website (Medford Newspapers)

## **Execution**

Below is a set of primary and secondary messages for the identified target audiences.

For Medford youth, grades K- 12, our primary message is "Set yourself apart by becoming a Community Emergency Response Team Leader." Secondary messages include highlighting that CERT classes are an interesting alternative to a traditional elective and courses count towards graduation requirements.

For the Hispanic population of Medford, our primary message is "Help ensure the safety of you, your family, and your community in the event of an emergency with the knowledge you learn in CERT." Secondary messages include "Emergencies are inevitable so don't be complacent", "The CERT program is accessible", and "CERT training and materials are now available in Spanish."

For medical personnel, our first message is “If a disaster were to happen today, would your patients and their families be prepared?” A second message to use would be “Your patients trust and rely on you; have you informed them about CERT emergency preparedness training?” This particular message would exemplify the trust in doctors, and that they, themselves, could be a leader during a potential emergency. A third message to use is, “An emergency could strike Medford today. Is your family prepared?” Again, this allows the audience to put aside preparing on an individual level and think if a citizen’s own family is prepared. These messages highlight a mild scare effect for the community to think broader than on an individual level.

**Objective:** to help Medford become better prepared for an emergency, graduate 30 youth participants from Teen CERT Training by June 2016.

Based on the success at a Teen CERT Training Program at the Lincoln County School District, we felt that this was a reasonable and achievable number of students. Our research revealed that this target audience is motivated by incentives that directly benefit them. Our strategy behind this objective is to align the CERT program with Medford elementary, middle and high schools while using social media to gain awareness among Medford teens.

#### **Tactics**

- Work with school administrators and parents to gain support for the implementation of a Youth CERT Training Program
- Add a Youth CERT Training Course to schools within the Medford School District
- Create multiple social media profiles with platforms such as Facebook and Twitter
- Develop a CERT hashtag to keep track of ongoing conversations about the program
- Offer incentives on the emergency preparedness social media accounts to generate interactions between teens and emergency preparedness personnel
- Create a functional and user-friendly website for the Medford CERT program. This involves hiring a web developer to design the CERT website. For simplicity and effectiveness reasons, we suggest the Ashland CERT website serves as a model for the Medford CERT website.

**Objective:** establish awareness of the CERT program among the Hispanic population.

By accessing this target audiences’ social network and collaborating with key opinion leaders in the community, the Hispanic residents of Medford are more likely to receive and retain important information about the CERT program. The

tactic to execute this objective is a direct placement of written program materials in local Hispanic-owned businesses.

**Objective:** 30 members of the Hispanic community participate in the CERT program by June 2015.

By removing constraints and making the CERT program more accessible, this target audience will be more inclined to participate in the CERT program. Media coverage specifically targeted to Spanish-speaking residents will increase name recognition of the CERT program in the Hispanic community. Our strategies behind this objective are to remove constraints, such as language barriers, for this population so they can participate in CERT training and to generate media coverage for the program.

### **Tactics**

- Offer bilingual CERT training and materials
- Create bilingual promotional materials to be placed in public libraries and community centers throughout Medford
- Send radio releases to KRTA 610 AM radio station
- Issue news releases to local television networks such as KTVL, KDRV, and KOBI, as well as to the local newspapers. Potential news release topics may include general information about when and how to get involved, CERT program graduations, and seasonal dangers.

**Objective:** establish 90 percent awareness of potential Medford emergencies among Medford students by June 2015.

Medford is located in the Cascadia subduction zone, where there is risk of being stricken by a “mega-thrust earthquake,” an earthquake higher than a 9.0 magnitude. Medford is also at risk for other emergencies including flooding and extreme weather. The strategy behind this objective is to provide information about emergency preparedness and the possible disasters that could happen in Medford by creating a fun learning environment.

The tactic we created to execute this objective is to hold emergency preparedness week at all Medford School District schools in late September. This involves holding a kick-off assembly involving local emergency responders: a firefighter, a police officer, and an EMT. The assembly will involve games and trivia related to emergency preparedness and response. Each day, an hour of class time is devoted to a different emergency. During this time, students may play interactive games in their classrooms to educate them about different types of emergencies and the protocol for each one.

**Objective:** 20 percent of medical personnel in Medford sign-up for more information on CERT classes.

All doctors have to attend monthly department meetings; therefore, focusing on CERT during these emphasizes its importance. The credibility increases when the message is given at the institution and when given by spokespeople of the program. This removes barriers that the healthcare community might have when receiving and retaining information about CERT. Our strategy behind this objective is to create a positive image of the CERT program through testimonials from people who have taken the classes.

### **Tactics**

- Provide information on CERT trainings in the department meetings of all Medford area hospitals
- Include CERT instructor presentations
- Encourage healthcare providers to sign-up for the CERT e-mail newsletter to show how medical personnel are getting involved in the program

**Objective:** 12 percent of the medical personnel in Medford participate in the CERT program training.

To achieve this objective, our tactic is to host an event in early September that will promote the importance of CERT training. On the week of the event, we want to utilize traditional and social media to promote the event. Incentives for medical personnel to come to this event are snacks, prizes, and speeches by respected keynote speakers. To increase accessibility, the event will be held at Fichtner-Mainwaring Park in Medford and Twin Creeks Park in Central Point. There will be laptops and iPads at the event for people to register online for the CERT program.

### **Evaluation Measures**

To evaluate the success of the strategic plan, we have created a method of evaluation for each objective. These evaluation methods are provided below.

- • Take inventory of the number of youth graduates from the CERT program
- Survey the Hispanic population of Medford to determine awareness levels of the CERT program
- Take inventory of the number of Hispanic residents who participated in the CERT program
- Survey Medford students to determine their awareness of potential Medford emergencies
- Take inventory of the number of medical personnel who signed up for more information regarding CERT classes
- Take inventory of the number of Medford medical personnel who completed the CERT training courses

# Public Relations Campaign: Spring 2014

## Core Challenge and Opportunity

The core challenge is to create awareness about the emergency notification system, and to increase registrations for the alert system among the broad population. Despite having done Internet research about Medford Emergency Management, our team was unaware about the alert system prior to speaking with staff. This revealed that there was not even awareness on the Internet to guide consumers to register for the alert system and be presented with the opportunity to connect with mobile and Internet users. With the lack of community self-sufficiency during an emergency, targeting a younger audience will make the greatest impact in the future. If children learn emergency preparedness tactics at a young age they are more likely to maintain this knowledge through their adolescence and into adulthood. Since the level of communication between parents and their children is typically higher at an elementary level, targeting third graders will be beneficial in also reaching parents.

## Goal

The long-term goal of Medford Emergency Management program is for all residents and daily visitors to be self-sufficient and knowledgeable about what to do in the event of an emergency.

## Target Audiences

Fourth grade students at Hoover Elementary School in Medford and their parents - approximately 400 people

Research has shown there is most communication between students and parents at that age within this audience, so 4th grade students are a target audience. Fourth grade students were also a focus of this campaign because they are more inclined to share fun activities that happened at school with their parents, creating a higher propensity for parent involvement.

## Medford Community

The second target audience for this public relations campaign is the community as a whole. The goal is to target men and women who have Internet access or cell phone text messaging capability so they can receive electronic text messages or emails from the Jackson County Citizen Alert! system.

## Execution

For Fourth grade students at Hoover Elementary School and their parents, our primary message is “Are you Rogue Valley Ready?” This message is intended to be self-reflective of an individual’s current plan in the event of an emergency in Rogue Valley. The message is quick, simple, and easy for all reading levels to comprehend. Our secondary message for the parents is “Help your child to build emergency preparedness skills to last a lifetime.” Parents want their children to succeed. In saying children can build lifelong skills, parents will be more inclined to participate in preparing their children. Our secondary message for the students is “Get ready, Get set, Safe!” Gearing kids up with a familiar “Get ready, get, set go” will instill a sense of accountability. This message hones in on the fun side of safety.

For the Medford community in its entirety, our primary message is “Sign up for Jackson County Citizen Alert! Today” To make citizens in Medford more prepared in the event of any emergency, it is essential that citizens are receiving text messages, phone calls, and/or emails about emergency procedures and conditions so they can best react and stay safe. Our secondary messages include “If you want direct information about a natural disaster in progress or missing persons, then sign up for Jackson County Citizen Alert!” This alert system can send a user emails, text messages, and phone calls about upcoming roadblocks, weather conditions, and emergencies.

Objective: increase communication between students and parents about emergency preparedness. By June 2014, our team will have implemented the “Rogue Valley Ready” backpack campaign among fourth graders in one of Medford’s elementary schools.

The strategy is to make learning emergency preparedness fun for fourth grade students and informative for parents. One way is to reach out to fourth-graders at Hoover Elementary School and implement a campaign we are titling the “Rogue Valley Ready” campaign. We will be creating a fun and active way to get kids involved, increasing awareness and knowledge on emergency preparedness for themselves and their families. The “Rogue Valley Ready” campaign consists of a backpack kit distributed to all fourth-grade students in one elementary school. The backpack kit will potentially include: a bright green draw-string backpack with the campaign’s logo and the URL to the alert system; a piece of graph paper for the students to make their own emergency plan with their family; a miniature flashlight that has the “Rogue Valley Ready” campaign logo and alert system URL; and a checklist that includes what to put in the backpack. Additionally, we will provide a letter for the teachers, students, and parents that states what the backpack is about and the purpose behind the backpacks.

To implement the “Rogue Valley Ready” campaign, we will provide backpacks to fourth-grade students filled with activities to do with parents that correspond with emergency preparedness. Everything in the backpack is strategically included



to provoke conversations between students and their parents about emergency preparedness.

**Objective:** increase the community's knowledge on how to be prepared in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Our strategy behind this objective is to increase the number of Medford residents registered for the Jackson County Citizen Alert! System by conducting a news media campaign. We will gain the media's interest in the low rate of awareness and then emphasize the need for emergency awareness among all the citizens in Medford.

Our tactics include a radio PSA, a short news release for newspapers, and a short PSA to put on the front page on the City of Medford website. All three written tactics will inform citizens to register online to receive alerts from the Jackson County Citizen Alert! system.

## **Evaluation Measures**

To evaluate our tactics, we will begin by measuring the number of fourth-graders who received a "Rogue Valley Ready" backpack.

We will also evaluate the effectiveness of the PSAs and news release by measuring the number of people registered for the Jackson County Alert! System following the campaign in comparison to the amount of people currently registered.

## Appendix A

The following questions were approved and utilized during our in-depth interviews:

- What types of plans are already in place in case of an emergency?
- Do you feel as though the students are prepared for an emergency? Why?
- What else, besides drills, do you do to educate the students in the district about what to do in case of an emergency?
- What do you think the Medford School District could do to improve its emergency preparedness education plan in the future?
- What primary factors should emergency preparedness education include for students in elementary, middle and high school?
- What methods of communication does the school district use to share emergency preparedness information with parents and family members? Do you think this communication needs to be expanded or improved?
- How does the school district help support teachers, staff and administration in emergency preparedness training?

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