

September 11, 2017

The devastation from Hurricane Harvey has been unimaginable, the Houston Texas area and surrounding communities will be impacted for many years to come. Not to mention the impact to the rest of the country due to lack of production of goods and resources that come from Texas.

Those displaced from their homes, businesses and income will rely heavily on federal, state and local agencies for assistance. This disaster is reported to be the most significant ever recorded in that area and more devastating than most of us can imagine.

It is at times like this we all need to consider how prepared we are for similar such catastrophes. Here on the North Coast we are susceptible to large rain events which can trigger flooding that historically have isolated Humboldt County. The possibility of a large earthquake, like the ones in the early 1990s is always a possibility and would greatly impact our lives.

So with this in mind just how prepared are we to meet the demands of such disasters. Do we have the infrastructure in place to deal with the same type of issues those in Texas are now dealing with?

What if our power supply was disrupted, roads damaged, food supplies temporarily cut off, as well as fuel and heating capabilities abruptly halted. Are we able to deal with such things for our families and is there the ability for state and local government to address the issues.

The first thing we should all consider is if we have adequate supplies, such as food and water to care for ourselves for a minimum of 4 or 5 days. In a major incident you may be on your own for an extended period of time. So it is important to plan accordingly and insure that you have the necessary items on hand to care for your family and loved ones.

What state and county resources? Can we rely on assistance getting to us in a timely and orderly fashion? What contingencies are being made to mitigate these issues on the county level?

The county sheriff is the director for the county Office of Emergency Services and is tasked with meeting disaster needs at the county level. Having been a member of the sheriff's office for 31 years, 6 ½ as the sheriff, I am well aware and qualified to address this topic.

Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services is managed by Dorie Lanni, who is extremely talented and proactive. Dorrie reports directly to Sheriff William Honsal, who is the director for the Office of Emergency Services.

Dorie manages both full-time and volunteer workers, who maintain an ambitious training schedule, includes participating in disaster response exercises with an emphasis on the protection of life and property. The office also works tirelessly, after the disaster in mitigating relief efforts for those affected.

With that said I encourage you to consider your part in being prepared but to also realize that we do have resources available to deal with disasters, which may affect us in the future. This has been Mike Downey for community comment