



For Immediate Release:

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**FULTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HOSTS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR
NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

July 17th, 2014, (WAUSEON, OH) Fulton County Emergency Management Agency hosted "Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery" training on July 15th, 2014. There were 34 participants in attendance from throughout the NW Ohio Region ranging from health departments, hospital representatives, Public Information Officers, as well as a representative from the local Sheriff Department.

Heather Kost, Director of the Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) states that "Social Media is not a new trend but utilizing it in government and with public entities is a newer concept. People are using social media to get their information as fast as possible." Kost notes that the class was full within two weeks of posting the training. "This was a free Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training that I thought we should take advantage of. This training was only one of three that were offered throughout the state of Ohio."

Concepts covered in the training include the use of social media in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery to help people communicate and collaborate about events as the events unfold in real-time.

As far as how Fulton County EMA decides to move forward with Social Media, Kost notes that they plan to use social media, primarily Facebook and Twitter, in order to post information that effects public safety. "For example, if we have a tornado in Fulton County, which has not been spotted by the National Weather Service, we can provide updates locally and quickly to those who follow us. Even news stations look at local Facebook and Twitter pages to get information from the local level so that they can push it out to their viewers." In addition to Facebook and Twitter, EMA and the Fulton County Sheriff's Office collaborate on utilizing the County's "Notify Me" text and email messaging system to alert subscribers about Tornado Warnings, Snow Emergency Levels and other important weather updates. "We have over 1000 subscribers each to our Sheriff and Tornado Warnings 'Notify Me' alerts. We'd like to double that by the Fair," states 9-1-1 Coordinator Rich Kilgour.

To receive text alerts and/or emails regarding Tornado Warnings and Sheriff updates, click on the Notify Me tab on the Fulton County website at www.fultoncountyoh.com. Visit the alert center under Sheriff and Tornado Warning. For Facebook and Twitter information, visit EMA's website at www.fultoncountyoh.com/emergencyservices.

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