



FEMA

Warren County COWS and CALVES Programs

Warren County, KY – The 85,000 residents of Warren County, Kentucky, face a variety of natural hazards, such as tornadoes and other severe weather, chemical spills, flash flooding, landslides, earthquakes, and forest fires. A warning system alerts residents of impending danger, enabling them to take the necessary precautions to protect their lives and property.

In 1974, 31 residents of the small city of Brandenburg were killed by tornadoes. The loss of life was attributed to the fact that citizens did not receive warning of the impending storms. Subsequent tornadoes in 1976, 1986, and 1994 also caused death and injury that likely could have been avoided if there had been proper warning.

In July 1997, Warren County was awarded a grant through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to install twelve Community Outdoor Warning Sirens, or C.O.W.S. The sirens had the capacity to warn 100% of the residents of Bowling Green, the county's biggest city, and 80% of residents in the entire county. When the C.O.W.S. are activated during an emergency, residents know they must turn on their televisions or radios for further instruction.

The County recognized, however, that an outdoor warning system was not sufficient. In June 1999, the County received HMGP funds to install 250 indoor Community Activated Lifesaving Voice Emergency Systems, or C.A.L.V.E.S. The system is designed to warn people who are indoors or not close to a siren site, as well as supply disaster information in the event of a power outage. C.A.L.V.E.S. were placed in every school, nursing home, daycare, hospital, church, theater, indoor sporting arena, and emergency responder's office. The system uses a series of beeps followed by a voice message from the activating agency to alert residents of an emergency.

The County also implemented an extensive public awareness campaign to educate residents about the new warning systems. It sent out brochures with instructions such as "When you hear the C.O.W.S. mmoooove indoors. When you hear the C.A.L.V.E.S. protect your herd!"

The warning system is credited with saving lives on April 16, 1998, when a tornado struck the county's biggest outdoor shopping mall. Property damage totaled over \$2 million, but no one was killed.



Warren County,
Kentucky



Quick Facts

Year:

1994

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$179,845.00 (Actual)

Primary Activity/Project:

Warning Systems

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)