

FEMA Tests alternate Public Warning System site in Puerto Rico

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San Juan, PR – As our communities can attest from recent experiences, the ability to continue broadcasting information to the public during and after an emergency event is an essential capacity. With more than a million dollars invested in modernization improvements, FEMA upgraded the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) National Public Warning System (NPWS) facility within the Univision WKAQ-AM tower site in Cataño, Puerto Rico, and tested it successfully today.

From 10:00 am to 3:00 pm today, WKAQ radio hosts Ruben Sanchez and Angel Rosa held a special broadcast “exercise” from the radio station alternate facility, and provided an opportunity to assess the NPWS long-form broadcast capabilities from the FEMA NPWS broadcast fallout shelter at the WKAQ site. Also, they were able to do a live link between NPWS/PEP WKAQ in San Juan and the NPWS/PEP Auxiliary Site, WPAB in Ponce.

“This special broadcast will provide public awareness about preparedness and give Puerto Rico authorities an opportunity to share information and to establish themselves as the “where to turn to” for dissemination of critical, life-saving information to the public when other communications pathways are inoperable,” said Orlando Olivera, Coordinator of the FEMA Caribbean Area Office in Puerto Rico. “The confirmation that the NPWS is functional and robust, ensures that we can share accurate information, at the right time, which will help the public to make the right decisions that may safeguard life and property, particularly during an emergency.”

Specially designated commercial and public radio broadcast stations cooperatively participate with FEMA to provide emergency alert and warning information to the public, through the highly resilient NPWS. For the last 27 years, WKAQ-AM has been the NPWS designated radio station in Puerto Rico.

The 77 NPWS participating stations serve as the primary source of initial broadcast for a national alert. FEMA equips NPWS stations with backup



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Page 1 of 2

communications equipment and power generators that enable them to continue broadcasting information to the public during and after an emergency event. This is one of the National Continuity of Operations Program efforts to help ensure that under all conditions, the President of the United States can alert and warn the public.



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Page 2 of 2