

PREPTalks

New perspectives for emergency managers



Forging Resilient Community
Through Imperfect Relentless Progress

James Gore

Agenda

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Introductions (5 minutes)
Watch the PrepTalks (20 minutes)
Discussion (30 minutes)

Introduction



- Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore's District Four was devastated by the October 2017 Tubbs Fire, when 22 people were killed and more than 5,700 homes were destroyed in what was then California's most destructive wildfire in state history. Before this disaster, Gore was widely considered a leader on Climate Change Adaptation via Sustainability initiatives related to land and water conservation and renewable energy development.
- Gore is on the executive committee of the California State Association of Counties and serves as the Chair for the Resilient Advisory Board as well as the Chair for the National Association of Counties Resilient Counties Initiative.

Watch the PrepTalk

<https://www.fema.gov/blog/preptalks-james-gore-forging-resilient-community-through-imperfect-relentless-progress>

Topics

- The Essential Role of Elected, Appointed, and Civic Community Leaders in Disasters
- Crisis Communications
- Mobilize and Organize Your Community

Topic 1: The Essential Role of Elected, Appointed, and Civic Community Leaders in Disasters

- Government officials are the face of leadership in their community in disaster response and recovery. Gore shares this advice from his experience:
 - Ensure emergency management is a thread that runs throughout every department
 - Be honest, transparent, and build trust in government
 - Ensure broad community engagement
 - Adapt and move forward

“The reason we are still caught standing flat footed in communities ... is because we think we have to be perfect ...we don’t embrace imperfect relentless progress.”

– James Gore

Topic 1: The Essential Role of Elected, Appointed, and Civic Community Leaders in Disasters



1. How can elected officials and other government leaders in your community advocate for emergency preparedness and “imperfect, relentless” progress? Are all departments of government engaged in emergency management, and do they make preparing for disasters a priority? Do your elected officials and other government departments actively participate in disaster preparedness exercises?
2. How can you leverage existing community outreach activities to include disaster preparedness education? How are government communication channels used to solicit feedback from the community?
3. Do you have an accurate picture of the people who live in your community and their challenges to resilience? Do you have a community planning group of stakeholders from across the whole community to bring the voices and needs of all community members into planning for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery processes? FEMA’s Community Resilience Indicator Analysis GIS-tool can give you county-level data on 20 community resilience indicators identified by analyzing peer-reviewed research. Go to <http://bit.ly/CommunityResilienceIndicatorAnalysis> to view and download data for your county.

Topic 2. Crisis Communications

- Communications is an area to practice imperfect relentless progress:
 - The speed of the Tubbs fire contributed to the challenges in sending wireless emergency alerts and using the emergency broadcast system.
 - The decision not to send the wireless emergency alert message, quickly turned to finger-pointing and blame. Gore acknowledges that, in retrospect, they should have “woken up the world.”
 - Sonoma County recently conducted a wide-scale live code wireless emergency alerts and emergency alert system test which identified several areas for improvement.

“You can’t sit in an emergency operations center and have public information officers review every press release until it is perfectly sanitary and stale. You have to get out of the bunker.”

— James Gore

Topic 2. Crisis Communications



1. Does your jurisdiction have clear plans and protocols for alerting your community? Who has the authority to send alert notifications?
2. Have you tested your 911 and other systems to identify capacity issues? Does your planning team include the public safety answering points (PSAPs)? Are your 911, 311, 211 systems integrated to handle surges in call volume? How will these call centers be staffed? Do your disaster exercises include stresses on your emergency communication systems?
3. Have your emergency managers, elected officials, and public information officers worked together to develop pre-scripted message templates to expedite release? Are the clearance processes for alerts, social media messages, press releases, and other public communications designed for timely release of critical information? Do your disaster exercises test the timeliness of public messaging?
4. Do you have partnerships with community leaders and the media to deliver messaging to the public?

Topic 3. Mobilize and Organize Your Community

- Gore encourages all government leaders to mobilize and organize their communities now, by highlighting the success of how Block Captains:
 - Turned large cacophonous town halls into more intimate meetings focused on specific community needs.
 - Helped their neighborhoods recover, gathered ground truth, and were communication links between officials and citizens.
 - Built social cohesion and social capital in the community. Watch Dr. Aldrich's PrepTalk "Social Capital in Disaster Mitigation and Recovery."

1. What programs does your community have that could be used to organize and mobilize your community around disaster preparedness?
2. Does your jurisdiction have an existing network of neighborhood leaders?



PrepTalks. New Perspectives for Emergency Managers.

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