

Time to check sky for severe weather

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The City of Farmington Hills and Oakland County will take part in activities to educate the public on how to react and prepare for severe weather as part of Michigan Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 23-29.

On March 27 at 1 p.m. a tornado warning siren system and tone alert will be activated.

"This is a way to start the public thinking about severe weather and how to react," said Hills Deputy Fire Chief Pete Baldwin, who also serves as the city's emergency management coordinator.

There were 12 tornadoes and 24 floods in Michigan in 1996. Events in other parts of the country, including most recently the Ohio River Valley, have shown the importance of severe weather awareness.

"We rely on two methods for spotting a tornado," said Jeff Boyne, a forecaster with the National Weather Service in White Lake. "Trained spotters, usually law enforcement, and Doppler radar are used to spot a tornado."

The weather service conducts training sessions for officers in the spring and late winter to teach them how to spot tornadoes.

Doppler radar measures the wind speed and direction of rain droplets, he said.

"If we can tell that there's a rotation, we'll issue a tornado warning," Boyne said.

Flint was the site of the eighth worst deadliest tornado in 1953, but Oakland County has had many of its own along with thunderstorms and flooding.

Since 1950, the county has had 26 tornadoes that have caused two deaths and 78 injuries.

Genesee County with 28 tornadoes, Lenawee with 28 and Monroe with 27 are the only counties in the 17 southeast Michigan counties that have had more, Boyne said.

The county's costliest took place on March 20, 1976 in West Bloomfield, claiming one life, injuring 55, damaging or destroying 91 homes, 23 businesses, 26 cars and costing \$5 million.

Boyne said this is the time of year in Michigan where conditions are best for severe thunderstorms and tornadoes.

The National Weather Service issues a tornado watch when conditions are possible and there is an unstable air mass.

"We hope to get the word out even before thunderstorms develop," he said.

A tornado watch is more serious, he said, by that time a tornado has been sighted, which is

rare as only 2 percent of funnel clouds touch the ground.

A flash flood warning is issued where thunderstorms are apt to bring a lot of rain in a short period, usually to already wet ground in urban areas. During a flash flood, water can rise several feet in a matter of minutes, as in Ohio this past week.

Franklin County suffered four floods last year.

And when a stationary front is over an area, such as the Ohio Valley, the "Train echo effect" of repeated thunderstorms can increase the danger and devastation, he said.

Oakland County officials are trying to train more people in how to spot a tornado through its Skywarn program.

Classes for the Skywarn system will be offered at several locations beginning on March 16. For information or to register, call (810) 858-6300.

In case of a tornado:

■ If you are in a house, the basement offers the greatest safety. In a home without a basement, take cover under sturdy furniture or in the center of the house on the lowest floor in a small room such as a closet or

bathroom.

■ In mobile homes or vehicles, go to a substantial structure or if there is none near, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine or culvert with your hands sheltering your head.

Hills boy shares his view of drugs, alcohol with president

A Farmington Hills boy, 12, will share his insights with President Bill Clinton on how to talk to kids about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Matt Migliore, a seventh grader at O.E. Dunckel Middle School, will join 36 other teens in a radio forum with President Clinton at 11 a.m. Wednesday in Washington D.C.

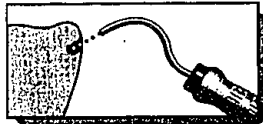
Migliore was selected on the basis of his 100-word essay in a contest sponsored by WJR-AM. The competition was announced Thursday and participants had 24 hours to come up with a composition on why they should represent the area.

Migliore, who already had experiences with drugs and alcohol, wanted to take part.

"There's certainly a focus on Matt's experiences, but the reality is how not to get involved with it," said Frank Migliore, Matt's father. "Matt understands the causes and the message he needs to convey — it's out there."

Matt will fly to Washington on Tuesday and take part in the discussion — moderated by ABC-TV's Peter Jennings — on Wednesday before returning home.

"He's really excited," said his mother, Pam.



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ON
REAL ESTATE

by Randal Goodson
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Typically, there is a chain of events that occurs when an offer comes in on a home. After a meeting of the minds, the buyer often brings in a home inspector who usually finds a few items that need to be repaired. The Realtor gives the homeowner a list of the requested repairs. What comes next?

The seller takes care of the repairs in most transactions. Many sellers wait until the week before the closing to call someone to do the work they want to be sure that they are going to make it to the closing table before they spend money on repair work.

If you are responsible for making repairs to a home you are selling, make sure you have the work done well in advance of the closing date by licensed professionals who will stand behind their work. If the work is done at the last minute and is incomplete or unsatisfactory, it could cause complications at the closing. You should provide the buyers with all the receipts and the names of the persons to contact in case there is a problem with the repairs.

For professional advice on all aspects of buying or selling real estate, talk to Randal Goodson, Vice-President, The Prudential Great Lakes Realty. Please come by his office at 31000 Northwestern Highway, Suite 101, Farmington Hills, or phone him at 810-539-3445.



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**Dentistry
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by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S. &
Martha P. Zinderman, R.N., D.D.S.
NEWS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN
A study recently published in the Journal of Periodontology suggests that untreated periodontal (gum) disease in pregnant women may be a factor for a large share of premature births for which no other explanation can be found. Although this finding is preliminary, it backs up an unpublished study conducted about a decade ago at Harvard University's Forsyth Dental Clinic, in which a similar relationship between periodontal disease and preterm births was found. The new findings suggest that periodontal infection may be responsible for as many as 18 percent of the 350,000 premature babies who are born weighing less than 3.5 pounds each year in the U.S.
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P.S. Periodontal disease in pregnant women seems to interfere with fetal development by virtue of bacteria releasing toxins into the mother's bloodstream that reach the placenta to retard the growth of the fetus.

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