

# THE PREPAREDNESS POST

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
YEAR 5, ISSUE 1

## Utah Public Health Preparedness and Federal Funding

By Charla Haley

In December 2011, the Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) released the ninth annual *Ready or Not? Protecting the Public from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism* report. In the past, the report scored states based on various criteria. This year, the report looked at risk posed to key public health preparedness programs due to federal and state budget cuts.

“We’re seeing a decade’s worth of progress eroding in front of our eyes,” said Jeff Levi, PhD, executive director of TFAH. “Preparedness had been on an upward trajectory, but now some of the most elementary capabilities—including the ability to identify and contain outbreaks, provide vaccines and medications during emergencies, and treat people during mass traumas—are experiencing cuts in every state across the country.”

Combined federal, state and local budget cuts mean public health departments can no longer afford to fund a number of basic elements of preparedness. In the past year, 40 states and Washington, D.C. cut public health funds—with 29 of those states and D.C. cutting their budgets for a second year in a row. Fifteen states, including Utah, grappled with three consecutive years of reductions. Federal funds for state and local preparedness declined by 38 percent from fiscal year (FY) 2005 to 2012 (adjusted for inflation) and additional cuts are expected

under changes in the federal budget.

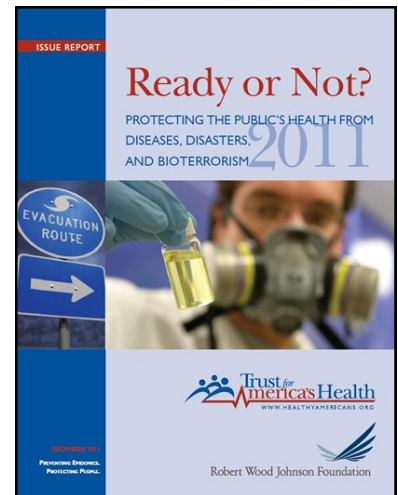
Dr. Marc Babitz, Director of the Division of Family Health and Preparedness, Utah Department of Health comments, “Funding changes in any government program, including preparedness, is a reality that we fully understand. Rather than focusing on what is being decreased or may be lost, we must remember how far we have come and how much better we are prepared.”

One of the programs likely to face substantial cuts is the Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI). In fact, Salt Lake City is in danger of being dropped from that program. The CRI began in 2004 to help large metropolitan jurisdictions plan how to receive and quickly distribute medical supplies from a national stockpile. Salt Lake City was added in 2006, when the program expanded to 72 cities and metropolitan areas. (Tooele and Summit county also participate in the CRI program.)

Bob Jeppesen, Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, says hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics forced Salt Lake County to get a jump on emergency preparedness, but it wasn’t until the terrorist attacks of 9/11 that preparedness was elevated to a national priority. And,

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To find Preparedness Training information:  
<https://www.utah.train.org>



### U-TRAIN

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he says, when you consider the progress Salt Lake County has made in recent years, the CRI has made a difference.

The SLVHD is responsible for getting medications and supplies to more than a million residents within 48 hours of a health threat. Last year, federal reviewers gave SLVHD's stockpile plan a 71, eight points below the "acceptable threshold" score of 79. But, in 2006, the same plan received a 68. Jeppesen points to the strategies developed with the CRI funds, including storage site rentals and a computerized system for tracking shipments and rotating expired supplies. And, he says, those advancements have helped with other public health emergencies, such as the H1N1 flu pandemic.

In fact, Jeppesen says even if your plans are great one year, they require regular updating to stay current. That takes money and he notes that anticipated budget cuts will hurt plans to increase staff training, including 20 people who are assigned to the SLVHD central warehouse. He adds, "We're strictly operating off these federal grants."

Jeppesen continues that, adding in Salt Lake County's budget issues rules out the possibility of local government picking up the tab. "This isn't just another big government spending program: It is a national security issue."

From the state's perspective, Dr. Babitz says that over the years, he's been very impressed by the work of Utah's preparedness staff and the many agencies with whom they collaborate, including the Salt Lake Valley Health Department. "We know that we will face challenges in our future, such as a major earthquake, but I am comforted by the fact that we have done everything possible to maximize our preparedness for such an event."

"During the anthrax attacks and Hurricane Katrina, we witnessed what happens when public health doesn't have the technology, resources, workforce or training needed to respond to emergencies," said James S. Marks, senior vice president and director of the Health Group of RWJF. "If we ignore preparedness now, we'll be sorry later when the next emergency strikes."

UDOH's preparedness staff say past public health emergencies have highlighted the importance of preparedness efforts. Many disasters have shown that the better prepared individuals are, the greater the area's ability to bounce back from a disaster.

The report includes a series of recommendations:

- Assuring dedicated funding and strengthening public health preparedness core capabilities;
- Improving biosurveillance to rapidly detect and track outbreaks or attacks;
- Improving research, development and manufacturing of vaccines and medications;
- Enhancing the ability to provide care for a mass influx of patients during emergencies;
- Providing better support to help communities cope with and recover from disasters; and
- Coordinating food safety with other preparedness efforts through the strategic implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011.

## Resolve to Be Ready *By Joe Dougherty*

Now that it's the last week in the new year, many Utahns have already broken some of the resolutions made in an attempt to improve themselves. They may have tried to lose weight, attempted to start that novel they've been talking about writing for three years, given up on building that shed, or even postponed taking up a new hobby.

Here's an idea that never goes out of style: Why not resolve to be ready in 2012? Ready for what? Disaster.

Across the nation in 2011, we saw winter storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes. Since late 2010, Utah has had two flooding events that led to Presidential Disaster Declarations. The December 1 windstorm that struck Davis County knocked out power and overturned semitrailers. And in just one week, Utah registered 11 tiny earthquakes. We expect hundreds of small earthquakes to occur in Utah each year and we're overdue for the "Big One."

Why not resolve now to prepare yourself and your family to survive a disaster? There are simple steps you can take. Start by clicking around [BeReadyUtah.gov](http://BeReadyUtah.gov) to learn preparedness tips in the following areas.

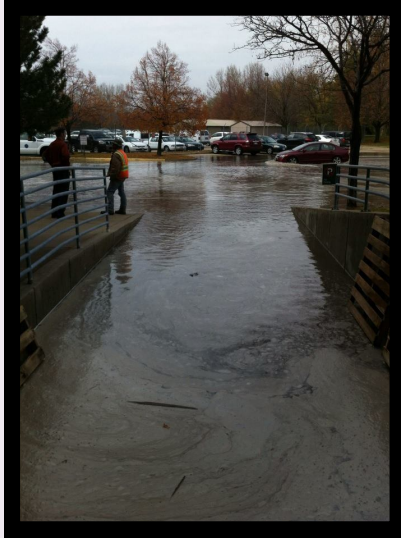
- Make a plan: What should you do in an earthquake? What if you have to evacuate your home?
- Get a kit: Learn about what should go into a kit you can grab if you have to flee.
- Be informed: Mother Nature has a lot of possible disasters up her sleeves. Learn about which ones can affect you.
- Get involved: In a disaster, expect help to come from neighbors. How can your neighborhood get prepared?
- **ShakeOut, Don't Freak Out: Register to join the Great Utah ShakeOut, happening at 10:15 a.m. on April 17, 2012. It's the state's largest earthquake drill ever. Join 700,000 Utahns who will drop, cover and hold on while practicing their emergency plans. Visit [ShakeOut.org/Utah](http://ShakeOut.org/Utah) <<http://shakeout.org/utah>> to register. The Utah Department of Health will be taking an active role in this exercise.**

Daily preparedness tips are always available if you follow us on Twitter [@BeReadyUtah](https://twitter.com/BeReadyUtah). When we resolve to be ready, we plan to survive.



## Putting Plans into Practice *By Joanna Larsen and Hannah Stream*

### Water Main Break Incident



On November 21, 2011, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), Cannon campus experienced an event where public health preparedness efforts, plans, and systems were utilized. This demonstrated real-life success in emergency response due to Public Health Emergency Preparedness funding (PHEP).

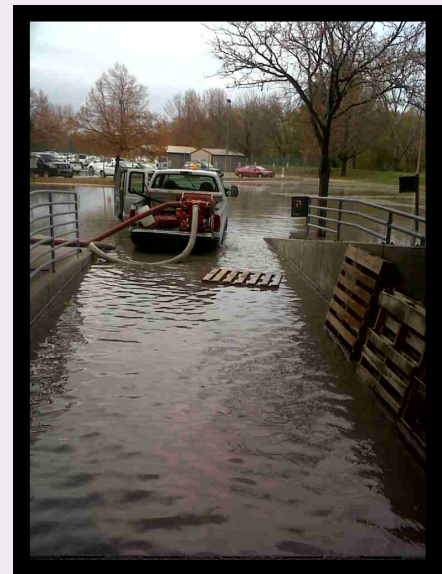
Late that morning, UDOH Employee Support (ES) was notified of a water main break outside the building and was told that the Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM) was working on the problem and would keep ES apprised of the situation. About that same time, the ES office began receiving numerous calls from employees who reported the toilets weren't flushing and there was no water in the building. UDOH ES spoke with DFCM and learned that DFCM was working with the Salt Lake City public works department and water to the building had been turned off in order to isolate the water break.

Further investigation traced the problem to Americom Technology Inc. (Americom), a company that had been contracted to drill for wiring for the Cannon building. While Blue Stakes had been out to mark all the critical areas for the crew to avoid while drilling, Blue Stakes failed to mark this area. As a result, Americom's drill hit the pipe that controlled the water to the building's fire suppression system. When water began to flood the parking lot, ES began gathering license plate numbers of the vehicles so employees could move them.

ES called the UDOH Executive Director's Office (EDO) and informed Dr. Robert Rolfs, Deputy Director, of the situation. During this time, Americom retracted the drill, allowing additional water to escape from the pipe. The amount of water leaking out from under the concrete easily tripled. Within about ten minutes, the water was threatening to enter the building via the loading dock. At that time, Dr. Rolfs made an executive decision to send all nonessential staff home; ES made two building-wide announcements and EDO sent out an email to all UDOH staff. UDOH Bureau of EMS and Preparedness emailed the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to department leadership, including ES and Dr. Rolfs, in case the information in the plan was needed for reference.

At 5:08 p.m., Paul Patrick, UDOH Preparedness Director, relayed a request from EDO to send out a message from Dr. David Patton, UDOH Executive Director, via the Utah Notification and Information System (UNIS). UNIS is the state of Utah's Health Alert Network (HAN) system. The notification was sent via email, SMS text, and phone to the 410 UDOH employees who are registered in the system. The notification was sent at 5:34 p.m. and was completed by 5:40 p.m. The UNIS system sent 66 text messages, 546 email messages, and completed 634 phone calls during that short period of time.

Upon Dr. Patton's request, EDO met to discuss the situation and plans for the following day. It was determined that staff would return. Employees were notified of the updated situation and to report back to work via email, UNIS, and DOHnet (UDOH intranet site).





## Kevin McCulley - January 2012 Employee of the Month



Kevin McCulley of the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness is the Utah Department of Health Employee of the Month.

Kevin is dedicated, organized, hardworking, efficient, cooperative, and understanding, and has taken the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) to a higher level. Due to Kevin's work ethic and cooperative approach, regional health care coalitions have been established throughout the state, which are greatly enhancing Utah's health care preparedness efforts. Kevin is very attentive to the requirements and needs presented by our federal HPP project officer. Kevin strives to incorporate all requirements into our program and preparedness efforts.

Kevin exemplifies both the department's and the bureau's goals and vision of customer service and teamwork. He is well-known and respected among our health care preparedness partners, and has a vast understanding of the health care facilities throughout the state, creating a teamwork approach with hospitals, clinics, associations, local health departments, and local health officers.

## Changes in the SNS Program *By Dean Penovich*

Some changes have occurred in the SNS Program over the past several months. Don Wood has accepted a new position within the Utah Department of Health. He is now manager over the Primary Care and Rural Health Program. With his new assignment, the Bureau of EMS and Preparedness moved Brett Cross into the SNS Coordinator position, with Scott Munson supervising the position and the program. Brett is well qualified for this assignment and is looking forward to carrying on the forward momentum in the SNS Program.

We want to sincerely thank Don for his hard work and diligence in improving the SNS Program. Due to Don's dedication and the hard work of our team, Utah recently received a score of 100 on the latest CDC State Technical Assistance Review. We look forward to continuing and improving our efforts with the SNS program, while working hand-in-hand with our local and state partners.

### UDOH Web sites:

[health.utah.gov](http://health.utah.gov) (main)

[health.utah.gov/preparedness](http://health.utah.gov/preparedness)

[health.utah.gov/ems](http://health.utah.gov/ems)

**Utah Department of Health  
Public Health Preparedness  
3760 S. Highland Drive  
SLC, UT 84106**

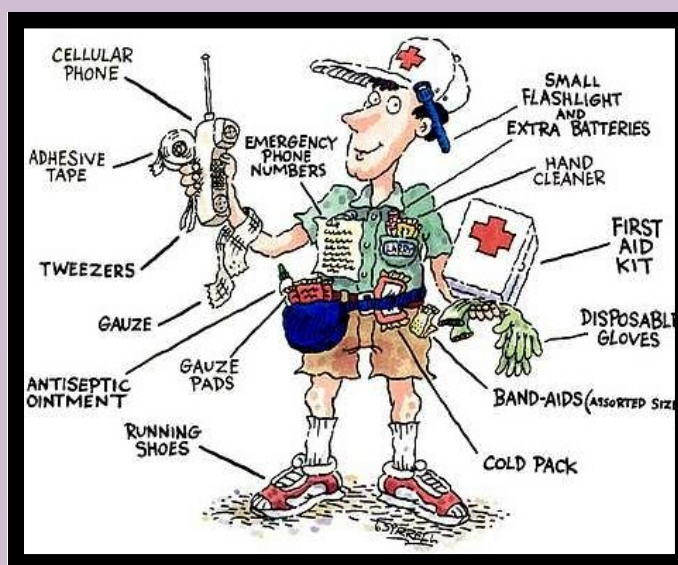
**MAILING ADDRESS:  
P.O. Box 142006  
SLC, UT 84114-2006**

## Bragging Rights for the Lab *By Sanwat Chaudhuri*



In November, the United State Laboratories: Public Health (USL:PH) Chemical Threat Section participated in a specimen collection, packaging, & shipping exercise administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This exercise assessed the lab's ability to properly collect, package, and ship emergency response specimens, blood and urine, from patients who may have been exposed to chemical or radiological agents. The USL:PH is one of many laboratories throughout the country that operate

within the Chemical Program of the Laboratory Response Network (LRN-C). Due to the nature of the emergency response specimens, the CDC & LRN-C requires blood and urine specimens to be packaged and shipped in a very specific manner. To pass the exercise, the lab must adhere to 24 collection, packaging, and shipping criteria and score a minimum of 85 points out of a possible 100. Some of these involve the use of two levels of evidence tape, leak-proof packaging, maintaining proper specimen temperature during shipping, proper package labeling for Category B Biological Substances, and appropriate patient and specimen paperwork. The USL:PH successfully completed the exercise and received a score of 100! Congratulations!



## Calendar—2012 Training

Date	Event	Location	Information
Feb. 6-10	Utah All Hazards IMT Unit Leader Academy	Sandy, UT	<a href="http://publicsafety.utah.gov/emergencymanagement/AHIMT.htm">http://publicsafety.utah.gov/emergencymanagement/AHIMT.htm</a>
Feb. 16-17	ICS-400 Advanced ICS - Command and General Staff - Complex Incidents	Cedar City, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011057</b>
Feb. 21-22	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents	Draper, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011051</b>
Feb. 21-22	ICS-400 Advanced ICS - Command and General Staff - Complex Incidents	Provo, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011057</b>
Feb. 22	Training, Exercise, and Plan Workshop (TEPW)	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1023945</b>
Feb. 23-25	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents (Thursday and Friday evening, Saturday morning)	Ivins, UT	<b>U-train course number 1011051</b>
Mar. 6-7	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents	Roosevelt, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011051</b>

## Calendar—2012 Training - continued

Date	Event	Location	Information
Mar. 13-14	EOC Management and Operations	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011065</b>
Mar. 14	Utah Shakeout 2012 - Senior Leadership	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>Judy Watanabe</b> <a href="mailto:judywatanabe@utah.gov">judywatanabe@utah.gov</a>
Mar. 27	ICS/EOC Interface	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011067</b>
April 3-4	ICS-400 Advanced ICS - Command and General Staff - Complex Incidents	Roosevelt, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011057</b>
April 3-4	Basic Public Information Officer	Hurricane, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011053</b>
April 5	JIS/JIC Course for PIOs	Hurricane, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1020466</b>
April 9-10	UPHA Conference	Sandy, UT	<b>Sponsor: Utah Public Health Association Conference</b> <a href="http://upha.org/conference/">http://upha.org/conference/</a>
April 17-19	Utah Shakeout 2012 Exercise	Salt Lake City, UT	<a href="http://www.shakeout.org/utah/">http://www.shakeout.org/utah/</a>
April 17-19	Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Higher Education	Orem, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1030838</b>
April 24-25	Enhanced Threat and Risk Assessment - Local Jurisdiction	Taylorville, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1029991</b>
April 24	Lt. Governor's Conference on Service	Davis Conference Center, Ogden, UT	<a href="http://volunteers.utah.gov/programs/conferenceonservice.html">http://volunteers.utah.gov/programs/conferenceonservice.html</a>

## Calendar—2012 Training - continued

Date	Event	Location	Information
April 26	City and County Director's Conference	Salt Lake City, UT	
May 1-2	ICS-400 Advanced ICS - Command and General Staff - Complex Incidents	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011057</b>
May 8-9	Governor's Public Safety Summit	Davis Conference Center Ogden, UT	<a href="http://publicsafety.utah.gov/dps/safety_summit.html">http://publicsafety.utah.gov/dps/safety_summit.html</a>
May 15-17	HPP Hospital Healthcare Summit		<b>Sponsor: UDOH Bureau of EMS and Preparedness - HPP Program</b> <b>Lanette Sorenson - lanettesorensen@utah.gov</b>
May 22-23	Recovery from Disaster, the Local Government Role	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>U-Train course number 1011066</b>
June TBA	Utah Shakeout Tabletop 2012 Recovery		<b>Judy Watanabe</b> <b>judywatanabe@utah.gov</b>
June 8	Workshop: Working with Functional Disabilities - Evacuations	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>Sponsor: UDOH Bureau of EMS and Preparedness</b> <b>Rich Foster - rfoster@utah.gov</b>
June 13-14	ADLS Course	Salt Lake City, UT	<b>Sponsor: Intermountain Center for Disaster and Preparedness</b> <b>Christine Warren - christinewarren@utah.gov</b>

*Newsletter edited and produced by Charla Haley*