

Article for November 12, 2014

It's that time of year already! Thanksgiving turkeys are sitting by Santa Claus! Cool fronts and rain, north wind and ... south wind? Yes, we're in Texas! Don't worry if you don't like today's weather. It will be different tomorrow!

It's interesting how in the spring we start looking into hurricane forecasts, with how many storms are predicted, and what category they will be. Then, as the summer moves along, we oftentimes start wishing for rain forecasts, hoping to get by without a drought. Then, fall hits, chances of hurricanes lessen, and we begin to think about winter weather.

Governor Perry must do about the same thing, because he has proclaimed November 12, 2014 as Winter Weather Awareness Day. In Texas, some part of the state may be affected by winter weather anytime from about November through April. Even though we usually think of our area as having a sunny climate, that can – and does – change at least a few times each year. How many times did Madison County see snow last year? Although a few snowfalls a year doesn't seem so bad, we still must be prepared for winter weather, and it's best to prepare for 72 hours on our own, just in case we're without electricity or fuel.

I know you're probably tired of me writing about a disaster supply kit, and I'm sure yours is ready to roll! So, just pull yours out and check the supplies in it. Do you still have fresh batteries for your flashlight? Are the medications in it up to date? Check the dates on your canned and non-perishable food items, freshen up your blankets and warm clothing such as coats, gloves, and hats. Did you add a new pet or family member this year? Make sure you have their needed supplies included, too. Check out the supplies in your first aid kit, too, and make sure your emergency kit in your vehicle is updated and freshened, too! Did you remember to put the windshield scraper, booster cables, tow rope, shovel, fire extinguisher, and tool kits back in your vehicle after you used them last?

Check your cell phone, too! Make sure that you have the telephone number 1-800-452-9292 saved in your phone, or have www.drivetexas.org as one of your favorite web pages in your smartphone. You can find out about statewide road conditions from TxDOT here on the website or by calling.

When winter storms threaten, be sure to monitor broadcast media and NOAA Weather Radio for information. Keep your gas tank full and slow down when driving, especially on icy roads. Remember that it may take your vehicle longer to stop when you apply the brakes. Watch for downed trees and power lines across roadways. When the power is out, treat all intersections as four-way stops, and, as always, Be Safe Out There!