

Calvert Shares Safety Tips for Severe Weather Week

By **Damon Stone**
Staff Writer

This past week, from March 1 to March 7, was designated as Severe Weather Awareness week in Kentucky, which has recently seen its share of severe and rapidly changing weather.

David Calvert, the National Weather Service Cooperative Weather Observer for Allen County, helps to keep official records on the weather for Scottsville and Allen County.

“(Severe weather) is not just wind or hail, but, of course, we have some tornado activity here, but when they’re giving watches or warnings, that’s something you need to really watch,” Calvert explained.

Calvert explained that the difference between a watch and a warning is that with a watch, conditions are favorable for something to occur, whereas a warning is that there is actively one on the ground, whether that be a tornado or any other type of severe weather.

“You really need to just kind of keep up on the weather when those alarms go off, until everything’s past and cleared,” Calvert added. “I’m sure everybody’s seen these destructions where a tornado hits, being EF1 through EF5, and what damage they do.

But the biggest thing I’ve seen here in Allen County and Scottsville is flash flooding.”

According to the National Weather Service, flash flooding can occur within less than six hours, and is the number one cause of deaths with thunderstorms, with more than 90 fatalities each year, mostly occurring at night.

Calvert explained that there have been several rescues from flash flooding in the county, with this past rain storm seeing six inches, with the fire department needing to do two water recoveries in the same afternoon during the storm.

“In the past, we’ve had people actually drown and get swept away,” Calvert said.

Calvert explained that a foot of water could take a vehicle about the size of a small SUV, and manage to take it into the creek, and urged the National Weather Service’s message of “Turn around, don’t drown.”

“That’s the biggest thing in Allen County and Scottsville,” Calvert said. “Not to say that wind, tornadoes and hail are not, but people have been irresponsible with that.”

Calvert explained that there has not been a drastic temperature change in the region, but that it has seen a

significant increase in rain, with the record being the rain storm in 1969 which saw nine and a half inches.

“When you have storms come through, used to, you would see like a three or four-inch rain, now you’re seeing six-inch rain, and (some) of them have been setting 500-year records, and then next year, they’re setting another 500-year record,” Calvert explained. “We’re looking at some places now that’s got two feet of rain.”

Calvert added that, with flash flooding in particular, being indoors and off the roads will do a great deal to keep people safe, with tools being available should someone be involved in a water-related rollover where they can break the glass.

Additionally, the National Weather Service explains that staying away from high water, storm drains, ravines, or culverts can help, and to move to higher ground if needed.

“General Motors has OnStar, which automatically calls the police and stuff like that, and you need to make sure you always have a cell phone with you, or something with you where you can contact somebody,” Calvert explained. “The biggest thing is just don’t cross an area, especially an area



▲ FILE PHOTO | MATT PEDIGO

Scottsville firefighter Jeff Young calls back for a life jacket to put on Calvin Scott, 72, Fleet Road, after rescuing him with only moments to spare before rampaging floodwaters swallowed Scott’s truck. The truck had been thrown off Pleasant Ridge Church Road, where Drakes Creek looked like the Ohio River during Sunday’s (May 1, 2010) historic flood. Scott could only be reached using the SFD’s ladder truck, which was requested by Constable Jeff Farris. It can extend its pathway up to 110 feet; it needed nearly all of it.

where there’s a creek and you’ve got a lot of moving water. It’s bad enough crossing an area where there’s still water.”

Calvert recalled how on Franklin Road, there was about two feet of water, and if someone hits that water, then they would be trapped there.

“Don’t cross water,” Calvert expressed. “There’s a difference if you can see the black top, and it’s really shallow, running across that is fine, but if it’s a creek area, turn around. Don’t try it.”

With tornado safety, Calvert urged that a basement would be the best place to be, but if the house does not have a basement, to get to the center of the house, and put up as many walls between yourself and the outside.

The National Weather Service advises that a plan of action should be prepared before severe weather occurs, and that people should pay attention to weather stations on the Internet, news or radio.

“Even if you’re in a basement, they recommend that you have a helmet, like a football or safety helmet, because even though they’ve had these tornadoes that take the entire structure away from the basement, they’ve had people hurt badly from flying debris falling in the basement,” Calvert explained. “(...) They’re quite frequent now.”

Calvert added that having something like a crowbar or hammer in the event of being trapped in a basement could help to pry away debris.

The National Weather Service also advises that mobile homes are not safe during a tornado, and should be abandoned for the nearest sturdy building or shelter.

If outdoors, the NWS also advises to seek shelter immediately, whether that be a basement, or if needed, get into a vehicle and drive to a sturdy shelter, such as an overpass on a highway. If there is flying debris while driving, they advise that drivers pull over and park, putting their head down below the windows, and covering themselves with a blanket if possible.

More information can be found on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, website, at noaa.gov.



Sheriff and K-9 Partner visits Allen County Primary Center

▲ PHOTO | SUBMITTED

Sheriff Ford, Sgt. Tabor and his K-9 partner Sulley along with Deputy Jones had to the opportunity to spend some time with students at the Allen County Primary Center today. They always enjoy the opportunity to spend time with our youth!

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Allen County.

Yet at this past Friday, March 7 meeting held in the Noble Allen Room at the library, three students shared some speeches five to eight minutes in length about the impact that Scottsville Rotary and Rotary International makes.

For this year’s speech contest, the theme was “The Magic of Rotary.” The students that participated, Paislee Harper, Isaac Shipley and Emma Gammons (by pre-recorded video due to a prior school commitment) then had to craft a speech based on that theme, on their own research and how they interpreted the theme.

Judges for the speeches included D. Porter, Debbie

Gillenwater and Harris Overholt. Porter, who headed up the speech committee, reminded each student that the use of notes was allowed for this initial round but that they’d have to have their speeches memorized for the next round.

Harper and Shipley were present at the meeting to give their presentation in person. Harper spoke at length as to how excessive time on screens and social media can have a detrimental effect on many her own age and that Rotary helps in terms of both mental health awareness and providing a community in which service to others above self is celebrated.

Shipley’s speech focused on recent programs held by the

Scottsville Rotary specifically which have both local and global impact.

Gammon’s speech was pre-recorded and presented in a video format.

While each student did very well in their overall presentation, Harper took first place with Shipley and Gammons taking second and third respectively.

While there had to be a first, second and third place, each student came away with a greater appreciation for what exactly Rotary does. Perhaps even some of those who have been a part of Rotary International for awhile had a bit a renewed sense of the impact this organization is having.

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