

# WARN<sup>SM</sup> HIGHLIGHTS



**WARN Highlights** is a bulletin aimed at improving communication and information sharing between members of the WARN community, including WARN chairs, member utilities, and partners at the local, state, and federal level. This bulletin will serve as a space where *you* can share lessons learned, provide suggestions on how to strengthen WARN, and advertise upcoming events.

From the tornadoes that swept the country in April to the spring floods that inundated much of the country to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, we are all aware that natural disasters continue to have substantial impacts on water and wastewater utilities. This issue focuses on three WARNs, Alabama, Minnesota and Missouri. They are great examples of the WARN concept: utilities helping utilities; and contribute to supporting a more prepared, resilient Water Sector.

We look forward to spotlighting the success of your WARN in an upcoming bulletin.



Source:  
www.nationalWARN.org



## WARN on the Web



### [AWWA National WARN Website:](http://www.nationalwarn.org)

NationalWARN.org provides a central hub where WARN members can find resources (such as fact sheets, the *Resource Typing Manual*, and other related Emergency Response publications), share Situation Reports from past activations, and network with other WARNs.

<http://www.nationalwarn.org>

### [U.S. EPA Mutual Aid and Assistance Main Page:](http://www.epa.gov/mutualaid)

This page has a number of WARN resources, including fact sheets, the sample *Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement*, *WARN Tabletop Exercise Facilitator Guide*, and a number of other relevant tools/publications.

<http://www.epa.gov/mutualaid>

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Spotlight: ALWARN	2
Spotlight: MnWARN	3-4
Spotlight: MoWARN	5

<sup>1</sup>The WARN<sup>SM</sup> logo is a service mark of the American Water Works Association (www.awwa.org) and is used with permission. More information about WARN can be found at www.NAtionalWARN.org

## Alabama WARN - Whirled into Action

AN INTERVIEW WITH BUDDY MORGAN, GENERAL MANAGER, MONTGOMERY WATER WORKS & SANITARY SEWER



### How did ALWARN get started?

ALWARN has gotten off to a shaky start. The massive tornado system which hit Tuscaloosa and wiped through 312 miles of our state in May had everyone scrambling around and looking for generators. We reacted, responded and in the end everyone's needs were met, but it could have been much smoother. Other utilities have recognized that we need to streamline the emergency response process and they are now more than ready to join WARN.

### What funding vehicles were used to develop the program?

The Montgomery Water Works and Sanitary Sewer Board has funded everything so far. When we are more established, we will consider another mechanism to fund ongoing exercises and the maintenance of our website, databases, etc.

### What are some examples of ALWARN activation?

Our first and only response to date came after the tornado on April 27, 2011, when Tuscaloosa and several other small- and medium-sized cities requested help. For utilities, there was not major structural damage reported, but major power outages disrupted service. Our state regulators have insisted for years we have back-up power so we had back-up generators in place and that was helpful, but there was still a tremendous need for generators. Fortunately, the Montgomery Water Works was able to provide crews and generators through WARN.



Tuscaloosa tornado damage (National Weather Service)

Within three days, just as EMAC was starting to kick in, we were able to meet the power needs of water utilities.

### What are some of the lessons you have learned?

WARN is valuable because things happen so quickly. With a hurricane coming down the Gulf Coast you might have two or three days to prepare, but with a tornado everything happens so quickly. FEMA helped out after two to three days, but we were the ones who responded immediately after the tornado hit. In water, we get things done: if things break, we go out and fix them. We respond, respond quickly, and do a good job. But I think we can make our response even better through WARN. We need to match the performance of our power utilities, which did an excellent job. They had crews on the ground working within 12 hours. With so many new members joining and with the lessons we have learned from our first response, we will be updating the operation plan.

In terms of reimbursement, we realize that it takes a while. Montgomery Water Works and Sanitary Sewer Board responded to a flood two years ago and we are still waiting for FEMA reimbursement. FEMA is not all bad, but sometimes bureaucracy gets in the way. After the response to the tornado, we did not even file for reimbursement—we just wanted to do the right thing.

### How does ALWARN recruit new members?

We currently have only six members but are planning a conference and workshop at which our state EMA director will explain the importance of WARN. We expect our membership to grow by 30-40 utilities, but we would still like to get more rural utilities on board.

### What would you say to a prospective utility that is not yet a member of WARN?

Think about the people you serve; you owe it to your customers to be prepared. You have a fiduciary responsibility to those customers to have an emergency management plan and WARN should be part of that.

# Minnesota WARN - Learning from Floodwaters

## AN INTERVIEW WITH RUTH HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MINNESOTA RURAL WATER



### How did MnWARN get started?

The MnWARN concept started in 2006 with communication from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), to organizations such as the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Minnesota Section and Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA). This communication resulted in a meeting at the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) with water and wastewater personnel to start the process. Minnesota's start-up process was relatively easy since most of the members are insured by the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust and Minnesota current law which addresses liabilities in the absence of mutual aid agreements. February 2008 marked the entrance of the first communities to join MnWARN.

### What funding vehicles were used to develop the program?

MDH has supported our efforts through grants and meeting space to help in the development of organizational documents and web site development. The Directors are all volunteers and have donated many hours plus travel expenses to develop and support MnWARN. MRWA has paid staff who donate administrative time to support membership, website updates and reporting.

### How does MnWARN make use of its website ([www.MnWARN.org](http://www.MnWARN.org))?

All the required documents are available on-line as well as a description of the benefits and frequently asked questions. The private side of the website includes the resources of member systems as well as several different options for communication during an event, requesting resources or sending out bulletins or meeting notices.



**MnWARN responders to the Brownton flood (MnWARN)**

### What have you learned from the repeated flooding in the Red River valley?

We organize unofficial, pre-incident meetings prior to the flooding event to exchange information from town to town to introduce the new people we might work with, see who needs what, and put people, such as pump companies, on notice.

### What are some examples of MnWARN activation?

MnWARN has been activated three times in the past two years, each time due to flooding. The cities of Amboy, Brownton and Shelley initiated three separate events on September 23, 2010, March 24, 2011,

and April 11, 2011, respectively. In each case, the water utility called the State Duty Officer who in turn called the District Representative of their affected District. Field staff from MRWA were also notified and responded with personnel and an emergency response trailer that included equipment. The District Representatives worked with system personnel and MRWA to locate and deliver the equipment and/or personnel needed to respond to the requests for assistance.

If you would like to be featured in our "WARN Spotlight" section, please contact [WSD-outreach@epa.gov](mailto:WSD-outreach@epa.gov)

("MnWARN—Spotlight", continued from Page 2)

Mark Streich, a utility operator in Brownton, remarked, "[The disaster] was unreal. It was several days of one thing after another. But we made it through it. Had we not had MnWARN, things would have gotten a lot worse. About five guys from MRWA came right after I activated MnWARN. They were amazing."<sup>1</sup> The team helped coordinate emergency resources and communicate Brownton's needs to the MnWARN network, according to Pete Moulton, MnWARN chair and member of the Minnesota Section of AWWA.



**MnWARN responders to the Brownton flood (MnWARN)**

The resources most commonly requested by systems included pumps, generators and personnel. The primary and most common method of communication was cell phones. The private side of the web site is used to update members on requests and report activities. E-mail between the requesting system and responding system is also used if available. After action meeting and reporting are also used to evaluate MnWARN requests and responses.



**MnWARN responders to the Brownton flood( MnWARN)**

### **How does MnWARN recruit new members?**

Recruitment of new members is done at every training session done by every association and/or agency in the state. Personal contacts by members with non-members encourage membership. MRWA provides on-site technical assistance to systems and encourages membership. MnWARN also hosts an annual meeting that is used to recruit members.

### **What would you say to a prospective utility that is not yet a member of WARN?**

Join now, do not wait until you have an emergency! The cost is nothing and the rewards are great.

<sup>1</sup>Buehrer, J. (2011). MnWARN Assists in race to avert flooding. AWWA Streamlines, Vol.3(7). <http://www.awwa.org/Publications/StreamlinesArticle.cfm?ItemNumber=56455>

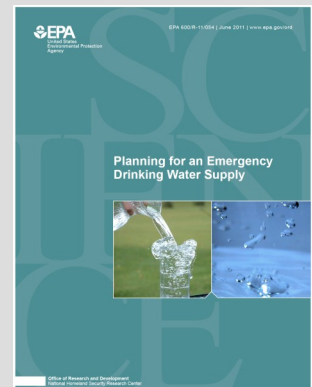
## **Planning for an Emergency Drinking Water Supply**



In June 2011, AWWA and EPA released *Planning for an Emergency Drinking Water Supply* (EPA 600-R-11-054)

This document reviews roles and responsibilities among various levels of government regarding emergency water supplies and encourages collaboration and partnership regarding emergency water supply planning. Further, the document discusses preplanning considerations for supplying potable water in an emergency.

To access more information and to download the new document, go to:  
[http://cfpub.epa.gov/si/si\\_public\\_record\\_report.cfm?address=nhsrc/&dirEntryId=235197](http://cfpub.epa.gov/si/si_public_record_report.cfm?address=nhsrc/&dirEntryId=235197)



## Missouri WARN - At the Ready

AN INTERVIEW WITH RANDY NORDEN, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MISSOURI RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION



### How did MoWARN get started?

Initially MoWARN had very little support. Missouri Rural Water Association assisted in completing the user's agreement.

### What funding vehicles were used to develop the program?

The funding for our WARN program has been provided by the Missouri Rural Water Association.

### Has MoWARN been activated to date?

MoWARN has not been activated to date.

### Have you had any activity due to the Joplin tornado?

MoWARN was on standby if needed. The Joplin tornado, although high-profile and a hot news item, did not cause much difficulty for drinking water and wastewater utilities since it was a very isolated incident. Missouri is about to get its part of the Missouri River flooding, but systems have had loads of time to prepare for it....so, again, MoWARN is on standby [Response as of July 2011].

### How does MoWARN recruit new members?

MoWARN recruits new members through one-day classes and at conferences.

### What would you say to a prospective utility that is not yet a member of WARN?

It is a no-brainer. There is nothing to lose!



MoWARN website—an interface and database

## Resources from NOAA

[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has multiple resources valuable to WARNs. The six resources listed below, as well as many more, can be found at [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov).

**NOAA Watch** is NOAA's all hazard monitor with postings on weather warnings, Doppler radar, river & lake levels, the drought outlook, and a La Niña/El Niño index. There is also information on flooding, oil and chemical spills, winter weather, probability of fire and much more at [www.noaawatch.gov](http://www.noaawatch.gov).

**National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)** is a clearinghouse for drought information and services. The website aims to communicate vulnerability and risk to improve drought-preparedness actions. WARNs can use NIDIS for outreach to and education of vulnerable utilities concerning drought impacts, preparedness, and resources. Find NIDIS at [www.drought.gov](http://www.drought.gov).

The **Precipitation Frequency Data Server** available from NOAA Atlas 14 ([hdsc.nws.noaa.gov/hdsc/pfds/](http://hdsc.nws.noaa.gov/hdsc/pfds/)) describes the recurrence of intense rainfall events. For example, 3.22 inches of rainfall in one hour at Richmond International Airport has a 1% per year average recurrence interval, i.e. is a "100-year rainfall event". NOAA Atlas 14 is the standard to which civil engineers design infrastructure such as storm water systems.

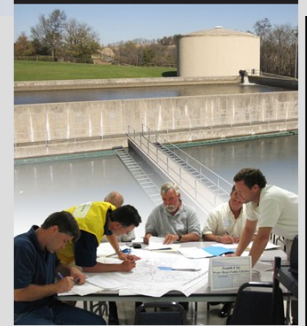
**NOAA's National Weather Service** ([www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)) also maintains detailed, up-to-date information on current and forecasted river levels and precipitation at [water.weather.gov/ahps](http://water.weather.gov/ahps). The **National Water Resources Outlook** ([wateroutlook.nwrfc.noaa.gov](http://wateroutlook.nwrfc.noaa.gov)) has additional information on forecasted streamflow. The National Weather Service also hosts a **U.S. Hazards Assessment** ([www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/threats.shtml](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/threats.shtml)) to provide emergency managers, planners, forecasters and the public advance notice of potential hazards related to climate, weather and hydrological events.

# Multi-Year Training & Exercise Plan Guide



EPA How to Develop a Multi-Year Training & Exercise (T&E) Plan A Tool for the Water Sector

EPA recently released the document *How to Plan a Multi-Year Training and Exercise (T&E) Plan* (EPA 816-K11-003). EPA released this new document to assist water and wastewater utilities in developing multi-year training and exercise plans, tracking progress and increasing preparedness capabilities at utilities. The document also assists in developing Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Plan (HSEEP)-compliant training programs. WARN members can use the guide to help update their ERPs. The document is available for download at <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/emergplan/upload/epa816k11003.pdf>



## Fed FUNDS: Federal Funding Tool (Under Development)



During a disaster, utilities may find it difficult to obtain the needed financial

resources required to make repairs and return to service. Many utilities may be eligible for federal funding programs to help recover from a disaster. The EPA is developing a new website tool to direct water and wastewater utilities to applicable federal disaster funding programs from the EPA, FEMA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, and Department of Housing and Urban Development. The tool will provide sample applications completed by utilities, fillable forms to document the damage, lessons learned from utilities, and tips for getting reimbursement and mitigation funding. The prototype tool entitled Federal Funding for Utilities—Water/Wastewater—in National Disasters (Fed FUNDS) is currently under development. WARN members will be able to use this tool to prepare to take advantage of federal funding programs. Keep your eyes open for its release.

## Upcoming WARN Events

EVENT	DATE/Location	POINT OF CONTACT
Intrastate WARN Tabletop Exercises	Planning 2012 Exercises	John Whitley whitley.john@epa.gov
Interstate WARN Tabletop Exercises	R1—2012	John Whitley Whitley.John@epa.gov
ICS/NIMS training	Multiple Offerings	David Goldbloom-Helzner Goldbloom-Helzner. David@epa.gov
WARN Chairs Meeting	September 2012	John Whitley Whitley.John@epa.gov Kevin Morley kmorley@awwa.org

Have an article idea for the next  
WARN Highlights bulletin?

[WSD-outreach@epa.gov](mailto:WSD-outreach@epa.gov)

