



## **NEWS FROM NOAA**

**NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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### **NOAA'S NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE REAFFIRMS TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA AS STORMREADY**

Officials from NOAA's National Weather Service today praised the Town of Cheektowaga New York for continuing to meet the set of rigorous warning reception and dissemination necessary to earn the distinction of being StormReady®.

"StormReady encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness," said Judith Levan, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office in Buffalo, N.Y. "StormReady arms communities with improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property – before and during the event."

The nationwide community preparedness program uses a grassroots approach to help communities develop plans to handle local severe weather and flooding threats. The program is voluntary and provides communities with clear-cut advice from a partnership between local National Weather Service forecast offices and state and local emergency managers. StormReady started in 1999 with seven communities in the Tulsa, Okla., area. There are now more than 1,600 StormReady communities across the country.

At the Cheektowaga Town Board meeting today, Thomas Niziol, meteorologist-in-charge of the Weather Forecast Office in Buffalo, will present a recognition letter and certificate to Town officials. The StormReady recognition will be in effect for three years when the town will go through a renewal process.

To be recognized as StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars;
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

“The United States is the most severe weather prone region of the world. The mission of the National Weather Service is to reduce the loss of life and property from these storms, and StormReady will help us create better prepared communities throughout the country,” Judith Levan said.

Disaster preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Educating yourself and your family on environmental hazards, maintaining a disaster supply kit and having an emergency plan in place, are all proactive ways you can be better prepared.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service: <http://www.weather.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service in Buffalo: <http://www.weather.gov/buf>

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards: <http://www.weather.gov/nwr>

NOAA's StormReady program: <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov>

StormReady<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark used by the National Weather Service.

***Remarks of Judith Levan, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, National Weather Service, Weather Forecast Office, Buffalo, NY:***

We Americans live in the most severe weather-prone country on Earth. Each year, a startling 10,000 thunderstorms, 2,500 floods and 1,000 tornadoes impact the United States.

Over ninety percent of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related. Through the StormReady program, NOAA's National Weather Service gives communities the skills and education needed to survive severe weather – before and during the event.

StormReady started in 1999 with seven communities in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. There are now more than 1,600 StormReady communities across the country. The program is voluntary and provides communities with clear-cut advice from a partnership between local National Weather Service forecast offices and state and local emergency managers.

To be recognized as StormReady, there are several requirements a community must meet. These include:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars and education;

- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

StormReady communities have the improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property – before and during an event.

Just like communities, families need to be storm ready by having an action plan for severe weather. While the National Weather Service strives to educate everyone about what to do when severe weather strikes because it is ultimately each individual's responsibility to protect him or herself.

I encourage all residents to develop individual disaster plans to prepare themselves for all hazards that can affect their area and themselves. You can contact the Town Emergency Management Office, the National Weather Service, or the Red Cross for information on developing a Family Disaster Plan.

I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Town of Cheektowaga and now introduce Mr. Tom Niziol, meteorologist-in-charge of the National Weather Service in Buffalo.

### ***Remarks of Thomas Niziol, Meteorologist-In-Charge, National Weather Service, Weather Forecast Office, Buffalo, NY:***

Extreme or hazardous weather events are not uncommon in the Town of Cheektowaga. If we look back over the past few years, we can include:

- October Snowstorm in 2006
- Tornado on June 30, 2006
- Golfball size hail storm June 16, 2008
- And let's not forget the heat wave we are currently experiencing....

The National Weather Service in Buffalo serves the western third of New York State including a population of nearly three million people. Over half of those live in the Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester metro areas. Cheektowaga is one of only two Towns in that area recognized as StormReady.

Emergency managers deal with severe weather and flooding more than any other type of disaster. Because of this, National Weather Service and local emergency managers, like Earl Loder, have formed partnerships. Our missions are the same – to protect life and property.

The NWS provides early warning of severe weather and flooding and emergency managers make sure warnings get out to all affected in their municipalities, schools, fire and police so that proper action can be taken. Simply stated, a warning for severe weather or flooding is of little value, no matter how accurate, if the people in the warned area don't hear it or respond properly to protect themselves.

The StormReady program is designed to enhance the partnership between emergency managers and the NWS to make sure that all aspects of communication, warning reception and response are as efficient as possible and that there are many backups in place in case one or more systems fail.

The criteria for StormReady status are communication, warning reception, warning dissemination, monitoring the weather, and training. I am happy to say that the Town of Cheektowaga has not only met these criteria, but has substantially exceeded them in many categories.

Since the original StormReady designation in 2007, the Town has added the use of NY Alert as a dissemination system; has shown commitment to emergency management services with additional staff, and has been active participant in several large scale drills and incidents.

The continued efforts of Earl Loder are to be commended, as are the support he receives from the Town Board.

It is my pleasure and honor, to re-affirm the StormReady status of the Town of Cheektowaga through 2013.

On behalf of the National Weather Service, I congratulate Earl Loder, Cheektowaga's emergency manager, and the leadership of the Town of Cheektowaga for their proactive approach to Hazardous and Winter Weather Preparedness. I look forward to a continued, strong partnership between the Town and the National Weather Service.