



Bob Riley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Steve Shivers
COMMISSIONER

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Contact: Kathleen McGehee
334-293-7500 or 1-800-441-7607

ADRS collaborates to bring national disaster preparedness initiative to Alabama

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) is collaborating with a national organization to bring an innovative disaster preparedness program to communities around Alabama.

Through the program, the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative will equip community leaders to go out into their local areas and train people with disabilities and seniors on ways to prepare for an emergency.

The program – called "Preparedness, It's Your Turn!" – is sponsored by the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund as part of ongoing efforts to build stronger communities. It is also being implemented in Mississippi and Louisiana.

"We are bringing a national message of preparedness to the state level, which will bring it into the community for individual preparation," said Betsy Berry, program officer of the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative.

Berry will speak to between 25 and 30 state-level community leaders and train them on using the "Emergency Readiness Wheel for People with Disabilities." The wheel offers tips on how to prepare and respond to a range of hazardous conditions and address common issues that people with disabilities and seniors face. The wheel will be used as a tool for people to develop their own emergency plans at home.

The by-invitation "train the trainer" event will take place Thursday, March 20, at Renaissance Montgomery.

Those invited to participate include staff from a variety of private and public organizations, including Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast, the Independent Living Center of Mobile, the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and ADRS.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.