



DSPN

Disaster
Survival
Planning
Network

Continuity IQ

Fast Facts for our Valued Friends and Clients January 2008

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN). In this issue, we provide information about 2008 predictions. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Holiday Hazards

Did you know...

- Using a simplified forecasting technique, researcher William Gray is predicting an above-average hurricane season in the Atlantic next year, with seven hurricanes, three of them major. Gray's team at Colorado State University had called for above-average storm seasons the past two Decembers - and both turned out to be wrong. But Gray said he believes this year's forecast will be better. Gray's forecast, now in its 25th year, is watched closely by emergency responders and others in hurricane-prone areas. But officials routinely express concerns that residents might become apathetic if predictions prove overblown.
- The UK's Department of Health has based its pandemic risk rating on one statistic - the number of flu pandemics that took place in the 20th century. With three pandemics in the past 100 years, the probability is an annual risk of 3 per cent, it concluded.
- The past five major earthquakes along the Hayward Fault have occurred at regular 140-year intervals. The last one occurred 140 years ago in 1868. But the 1868 event has garnered more distinction recently: October 2008 will mark the 140th anniversary of that magnitude 7 quake. "We don't know when the next big quake [will be], but we do know that the Hayward Fault is ready," Tom Brocher, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, told National Geographic News. New research also suggests the Hayward is much longer than previously believed, which could portend a disastrous earthquake two to four times bigger than was once thought. "It's going to be right in Oakland," Brocher said of the quake's likely epicenter. "The shaking is going to be much stronger and much more damaging."
- Earthquake prediction is a popular pastime for psychics and pseudo-scientists, and extravagant claims of past success are common. Predictions claimed as "successes" may rely on a restatement of well-understood long-term geologic earthquake hazards, or be so broad and vague that they are fulfilled by typical background seismic activity. Neither tidal forces nor unusual animal behavior have been useful for predicting earthquakes.
- Remember the panic when the first computer worm hit? We're going to have a crisis like that in 2008 when we get the first data center meltdown, predicted Subodh Bapat, a vice president in the eco-computing team at Sun Microsystems. "You'll see a massive failure in a year," Bapat said.
- The USDA Forest Service and Oregon State University researchers are predicting the Western U.S. is in for a 'fairly severe fire season in 2008. The widespread drought throughout the region, along with 50 years of moderate weather have left large quantities of dried

biomass, often called 'fuel'. We may see some nasty fires this year, and the research points specifically to the American Southwest, including California, Arizona, and New Mexico.

- Poor tornado predictions cause two problems: foolish behavior, when people ignore a warning, or hours wasted in shelter, during false alarms. Tornadoes, unfortunately, are tough to predict. Monster thunderstorms that should produce them don't. Smaller storms that shouldn't, do. According to Project VORTEX, the world's largest storm-chasing project, the tornado prediction picture seems to be getting worse

Brain Teasers

True or False

1. Scientists successfully predicted that a magnitude 6 earthquake would occur near Parkfield, California between 1988 and 1992.
2. The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) provides annual hurricane season outlooks in May, and an update in August.
3. El Niño winters are always characterized by increased snowfall in the Northeast.
4. Protecting confidential information is becoming an important issue as more American employees work from home.
5. Although 2006 was a big year for wildfires in terms of acres destroyed, it was not as big as other years in terms of property damage.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. *False.* While it is true that Parkfield did have a magnitude 6 earthquake, it did not occur until 2004, well outside the prediction window.
2. *True.* They also maintain an [archive of hurricane season outlooks](#).
3. *False.* Take Philadelphia, where snowfall averages about 20 inches per year. In the winter of 2002-03, 46.3 inches of snow was measured at Philadelphia International Airport, compared with only 0.7 inches in another El Niño winter, 1997-98.
4. *True.* Among American employees, 45 percent say they work from home one or more days per week.
5. *True.* The Oakland Hills fire of 1991 destroyed almost 2,500 homes and more than 400 apartment and condominium units. The economic loss from that fire alone is estimated at \$1.5 billion.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Are your employees safe-guarding confidential information when they work from home?
2. Do you update your hazards analysis each time you update your business impact analysis?
3. Has your executive committee reviewed your program's priorities for 2008?
4. Have you benchmarked your program against NFPA 1600, the voluntary standard for BC programs recommended by the National Response Plan?
5. Have you reviewed BS 25999, the world's first British standard for business continuity management?

New from DSPN

Check these out on our website:

- DSPN consultants are available to help you [audit your current plans](#) against emerging industry standards, such as NFPA 1600.
- DSPN can provide a [customized tabletop exercise](#) at your site that will be very engaging for your executive team.
- [Pandemic Experience for Executives](#) is a new tabletop exercise from DSPN that is customized for your situation at your site.

Comments and Contributions

Tell us what you think...



Thanks to all of you have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share with our readers? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

[Paul Klier](#)

Popular Services from DSPN

- [Benchmark Your Program Using NFPA 1600](#) is a one-day workshop we are staging in New Orleans in conjunction with the Continuity Insights Conference. Sign up now!
- In addition to our public workshops, DSPN offers [on-site workshops](#) that are customized for your priorities.

pklier@dspnetwork.com