

EC Comments February 2011

As I am writing this (Jan 30), I have been reading about a potential major winter storm that is predicted to come our way beginning late on Feb. 1st. Current thought is that we could get between 12 and 18 inches of snow. This would be a pretty major event! Not exactly a 1978 style storm, but major nonetheless.

Generally when we think of severe weather, we think of thunderstorms, lightning, and tornados, but we don't want to overlook the potential of a major snow event. Our first responsibility is to be aware up front of what may be coming our way. That is fairly easy to do by utilizing the NWS E-Mail Alert System. This link will take you to the page where you can sign up to get your own alerts: <http://www.weather.gov/emailupdates/index.php>. These updates are particularly effective if you receive email on your phone.

Winter weather may keep you stuck in one spot for a number of hours or perhaps as long as a day or two. If you are lucky, you will be stuck at home instead of somewhere out on the road. Some of the things to think about in advance of any winter storm are:

- How will I keep my family warm if the power goes out?
- Will I have the food and medical supplies that I need if I can't get out to the store?
- If I have a generator, will it start and run properly and do I have enough fuel to run it for 48 hours or longer?
- If I get stuck out on the road, do I have what is necessary to shelter in place for 12-24 hours?
- Do I have a full tank of fuel in my vehicles?

Looking forward to more spring-like weather, Spotter/Severe Weather Training will be available in March. The NWS gang from IWX will be coming to Coldwater on March 17 to present our biannual spotter training. The location is TBD, but keep in mind that this is a Thursday evening (departure from normal). More detail will be forthcoming.

On March 19, the Advanced Skywarn Training will be held in Goshen, Indiana. Additional information is available at <http://skywarn.nci-hamfest.net/>. The cost is \$30 for the day-long workshop.

On March 26, in Battle Creek there will be a basic Spotter Training workshop followed by an Advanced Workshop. These workshops will be presented by the crew from GRR. There is no charge for attending these workshops.

As you can see, there are plenty of opportunities to become more knowledgeable about the weather. Be sure to take advantage of one or all. Remember, to be a certified spotter with the NWS, you need to attend a spotter training session at least once every two years.