

STORM READY COMMUNITY

StormReady is a nationwide program which began in the summer of 2000. It is a voluntary program designed to help counties and communities take a proactive approach to the kinds of severe weather that affect their areas by improving local hazardous weather operations and heightening public awareness. Counties and communities work with the National Weather Service, State Emergency Management, and the media to become StormReady. By participating in this program, local agencies can earn recognition for their jurisdiction by meeting the guidelines established by the NWS in partnership with federal, state, and local emergency management professionals. In South Carolina, the NWS has partnered with the SC Emergency Management Division and the SC Emergency Management Association. These partnerships are vital to ensuring the successful implementation and ongoing improvements of the StormReady program.

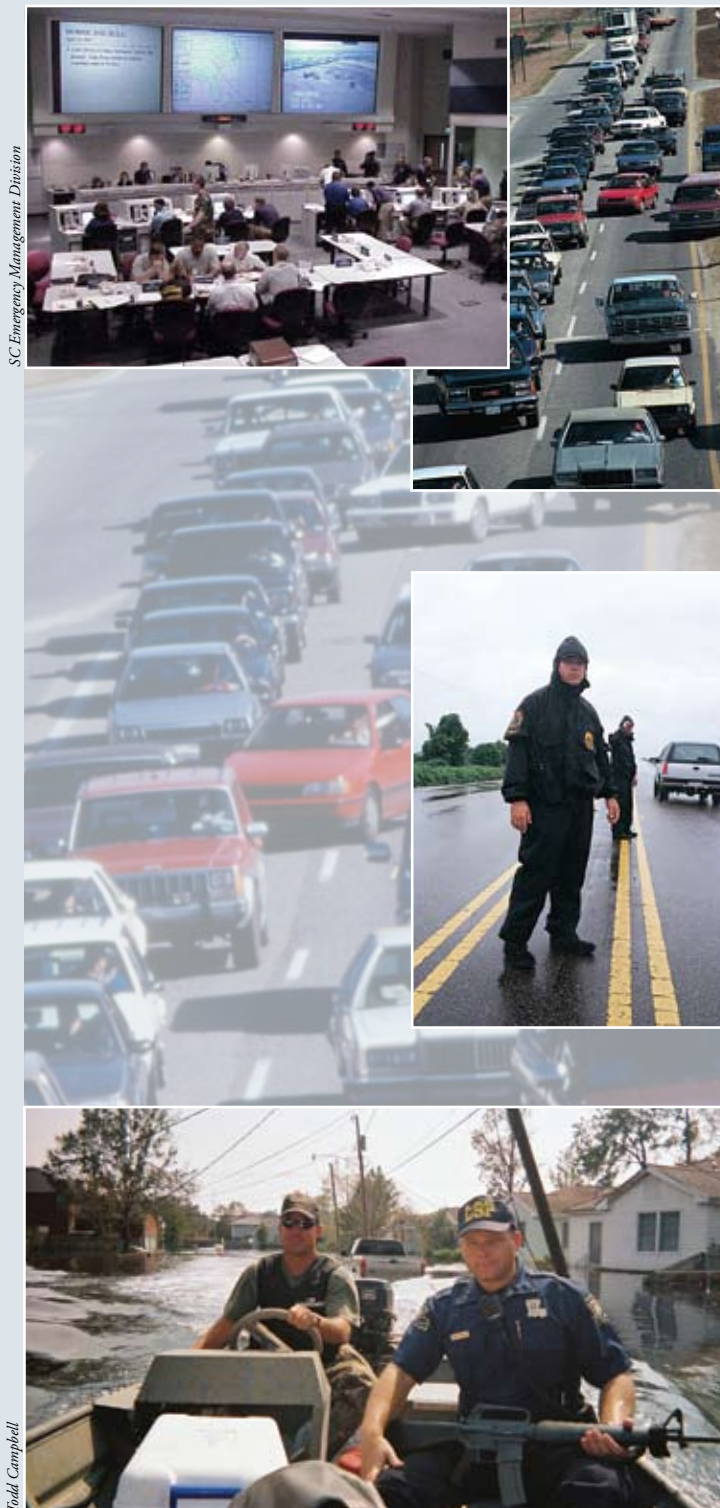
The StormReady initiative in South Carolina began in 2003. As of April 1, 2006, thirty six counties were recognized as StormReady along with six communities.

Some of the things the StormReady program is intended to do are:

- Improve the timeliness and effectiveness of hazardous weather warnings for the public.
- Provide detailed and clear recommendations by which local emergency managers may establish and improve effective hazardous weather operations.
- Help local emergency managers justify costs and purchases related to supporting their hazardous weather related program.
- Reward local hazardous weather mitigation programs that have achieved a desired performance level.
- Provide a means of acquiring additional Community Rating System points assigned by the Insurance Services Organization.
- And provide an “image incentive” to other counties and communities that can identify themselves as being StormReady.

Once a county or community is approved by the board to be designated StormReady, a recognition ceremony is conducted to acknowledge the hard work and effort county and community emergency managers have put forth to improve the programs for their respective counties/communities.

Now, just because a county or community is recognized as being StormReady, it doesn't mean that it is Storm Proof. Mother Nature will still unleash her fury at times but what is important is the fact that StormReady counties and communities have the best preparedness program possible to deal with such severe weather events.



SC Emergency Management Division

Phillip Jones

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Saluda County has been declared “StormReady” by the National Weather Service. Steve Naglic, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Columbia, appeared at the Dec. 12, 2005 County Council meeting and presented Council Chairman Hardee Horne with a plaque signifying the county's recognition. Saluda County's emergency management team, headed by Emergency Manager Robert Steadman, has completed a set of rigorous warning criteria necessary to earn the StormReady distinction, currently shared by 33 other counties and six communities in the state, and 980 communities in the Continental United States. 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 the local National Weather Service offices and state and local emergency managers. The StormReady recognition will be in effect for three years when the county will go through a renewal process.

Steve Naglic — National Weather Service, Columbia.



To be recognized as Storm-Ready, 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.



Steve Naglic, right, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service presented a plaque to County Council Chairman Hardee Horne declaring Saluda County “StormReady.” (Standard-Sentinel photo)