EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK JUST PASSED AND WE WANTED TO REMIND YOU OF SOME VALUABLE PREPAREDNESS TIPS.

Each year, thousands of Canadian families face emergencies that could change their lives forever. Don't be caught off guard.

- Practice your emergency drill as a family at least once a year.
- Know your emergency plans - at works, at schools, at daycares.
- Have your emergency kit ready. Whether you make your own or purchase a ready-made kit, it will be a great comfort having essential items in the case of an emergency.
- Know the risks. Knowledge will help you prepare for the worst.
- Take courses that will help you plan.

“When disaster strikes, help will come from those around you - your neighbours. Connecting and building relationships with them today will mean a better response and faster recovery. Download the In it Together: Neighbourhood Preparedness Guide (PDF) and start talking with the people next door and down the street. It will help you join forces so you collectively know what to do in an emergency, who to check on and what resources are available nearby. Prepared neighborhoods are resilient neighborhoods. When you're in it together, you're stronger.”

Visit the EMBC Government website for information on Neighbourhood Preparedness.

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=FFEA7894FF87499EBEF0DA43C99BEEAA

Facebook Will Roll Out Verification for Government Pages

Many are familiar with Twitter’s blue badge that verifies official profiles of celebrities, governments and the like, and Facebook is continuing the trend.

RENO, Nev. — Many are familiar with Twitter’s blue badge that verifies official profiles of celebrities, governments and the like, and Facebook is continuing the trend — the social media company will soon roll out its own verified mark for all government pages. Speaking at the Government Social Media Conference & Expo on April 30, Katie Harbath, Facebook’s head of politics and government outreach, said the Menlo Park, Calif., company is on the verge of updating its code so more governments have a verified
Currently, this feature — which helps social media goers discern between official pages and fan sites — has been limited to larger business, organization, celebrity and government pages. For instance, while the White House is officially recognized with the icon saddled next to its name, San Francisco’s city and county page isn’t — despite its status as a tech Mecca and its 252,000-plus likes. To improve this — and potentially use verified pages to generate more followers for governments — Harbath said Facebook is working to create a link so officials can request verification themselves. “As soon as we have that live,” she said, “I will make sure to find a way to get it to [governments] to request verifications for your pages.”

Deciphering the Facebook Algorithm

With or without the coveted checkmark, however, savvy posting practices are the keys for more page likes and more community engagement, Harbath said. Breaking down the Facebook algorithm, she said the company prioritizes the importance of posts in news feeds based on a five-level judging criteria. From most important to least, these the criteria are:

- **User Interest**: The first and most dominant factor is a user’s — or in the case of government, a citizen’s — interest in a page or profile. This is determined by how recently they interacted with the page.
- **Post Performance**: The second attribute is the performance of a post with other users — likes, shares and comments.
- **Creator History**: Third is a page’s overall track record as far as engaging its audience and drawing interest from followers.
- **Post Type**: Fourth are the types of posts that are published — is it an image, video, text, link, etc. — and how often a user interacts with that kind of content.
- **Timelines**: The last category is a basic measure of how new the latest post is.

To harness Facebook’s algorithm for wider reach, Harbath suggested varying the types of posts to engage multiple kinds of users, to post both local and national content to take advantage of trending topics, to upload video directly to Facebook instead of linking to YouTube, and to tastefully find opportunities to ask for followers. Finally, when it comes to social media metrics, she said to focus in Facebook analytics on the weekly reach measurement, which is the amount of unique visitors that have engaged with a page in the last seven days. This metric, she said, shows the real influence a page has beyond the relatively slow-moving tally of page likes.

Can an App Reduce the Number of 911 ‘Super-Users?’

Civic hackers have teamed up with Long Beach, Calif., officials to reduce the high number of 911 calls made by a small group of residents.

For the city of Long Beach, Calif., the challenge of emergency management is clear: A small number of people are making too many 911 calls for medical assistance. It’s a problem Long Beach and cities across the nation struggle with as a minority of callers and care facilities — also known as “911 super-users” — congest phone lines and stretch emergency resources. Financially, it’s a problem for providers, governments and even the callers themselves. Yet more pressing is the impact on first responders, where a minute’s delay could determine life or death.
To deal with the problem, Long Beach officials partnered with the civic tech group Code for America to create AddressIQ, a Web app that combines fire, police and business licensing data to reduce calls from 911 super-users. The tool connects addresses to both the number and type of emergency dispatches. The information enables emergency workers to collaborate on high-usage locations and assist callers through education, social outreach, or — in worst cases — enforcement measures. Long Beach paid $180,000 to participate in the CfA 2014 Fellowship Program, which built the tool with help from developers Molly McLeod, Dan Getelman and Rhys Fureigh.

“AddressIQ is one of the many ways the city is using technology to improve efficiency and communications,” said Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia. “And what’s especially exciting about this app is that it actually has the potential to improve health outcomes and really get the most out of every dollar of our public safety budget.”

According to city records, in 2013 the police and fire departments tallied more than 1 million inbound-and-outbound calls — 850,000 for law enforcement and 162,000 for the fire department staff, whose calls are 85 percent medical. However, 22 percent of all medical emergency calls originated from one percent of the addresses in the database, while the top 10 percent of addresses made up 52 percent of the calls. “Part of what AddressIQ does, is it gives us a very easy way to compile information from a number of different legacy systems and gives us a much easier tool to query where our public safety resources are being utilized so we can better plan and create strategies,” said Tom Modica, assistant city manager.

Following the start of the AddressIQ initiative in November 2014, work is under way to integrate the app into daily workflows and ensure there are no gaps in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act for medical confidentiality. “We’ve got to make sure we restrict medical information only to fire departments,” Modica said. “That’s a challenge that we’re working on. We need to be compliant and we will be.” AddressIQ could help alleviate overcrowded emergency rooms and paramedics.

A U.S. study by the National 911 Program, part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, reported that despite a dramatic fall in 911 calls that receive busy signals — 42.4 percent in 2007 to 4.5 percent in 2012 — the rise in 911 accessibility through technology has increased usage.

The study showed 70 percent of consumers dial 911 on cellphones, compared to 25 percent who use landlines. Other contributors include emergency mobile apps, VoIP and multi-line telephone systems. Of the 39 states that participated in the study, it was estimated that in 2013 there were more than 150 million 911 calls. The impact and cost of 911 super-users can be staggering. Martha Rigsby, a Washington, D.C., resident, averaged seven to 13 calls to dispatchers per month over a 30-year period and, despite having health insurance, owed more than $61,300 to the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services for ambulance transportation. Though frequent callers are one reason for high usage, McLeod said data revealed there are other sources as well.

“Sometimes it’s people with chronic health conditions or people with mental health issues, but we’ve also found — from the city of Long Beach’s data — that they’re also businesses or facilities, like senior centers,” McLeod said. Modica said the discovery prompted the city and CfA to focus on helping low-income residents find health care. “In a lot of those cases they are residential care facilities,” Modica said. “So the strategy adapted to identifying more of where those location are so we could implement a case-by-case solution.”

For care facilities, it might involve classes on fall prevention for seniors and those with disabilities,
or increased code inspections for facility safety. The open source app could be deployed in other cities but more analysis needs to be done based on metrics and various technical requirements, according to Nicole Neditch, CfA’s Fellowship director.

“We have a couple cities that are interested in what an AddressIQ pilot would look like in their city, but it takes a little bit to sort of figure out how to launch this application for a particular city and thinking about how it would scale to others,” Neditch said.

Article by Jason Shueh | Staff Writer
Jason Shueh is a staff writer for Government Technology and Emergency Management magazines

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Post-Earthquake Damage Assessment of Buildings Training Seminar (ATC-20) - June 4 (Victoria) & June 8 (Ucluelet)

Skye Emergency Preparedness is pleased to present on June 2, 2015 in Vancouver a one-day training seminar on building damage assessment for safety of occupancy (often referred to as Rapid Damage Assessment) after an earthquake.

The seminar will also briefly address damage that may result from a flood or wind storm. The seminar will be held in Vancouver at 369 Terminal Avenue - 6th Floor Trillium Training Room on June 2, 2015.

The seminar fee is $225, lunch included. The attached promotional sheet provides more details.

To register, please send an email with the attached Registration Form to: Doug@SkyeEmergencyPreparedness.com

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Mark your Calendars!

**EPICC’s Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday May 19th, 2015**

4:00pm – 6:00pm

The Sylvia Hotel, Vancouver BC

Come and join us for our AGM. We will have a short presentation outlining our Strategic Plan for 2015 and beyond, elect our new directors and provide an update on the organization.

Snacks & Refreshments provided!

**RSVP to info@epicc.org by May 5th 2015**

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