

## ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE

### 2016 CRITIQUE AND AWARDS PROGRAM

Class 47

**File: Lawrence\_EmergencyHandbook\_class46\_PDF**

*Name of project:* Emergency Handbook

*Category:* Crisis Communications    *Class:* ~~46~~

#### ***DESCRIBE THE PROJECT'S PURPOSE INCLUDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND NEED:***

Emergencies and natural disasters are a regular part of life in Alabama. Tornadoes occur throughout the year. Hurricanes pose a threat from late spring until late fall. While rarer, floods, ice storms and even snow can cause serious problems in the state. Alabama Extension needed a way to convey emergency preparedness and recovery information accurately and rapidly when the state is impacted by disaster.

The “Emergency Handbook” was created to provide citizens with comprehensive and easy-to-read information for preparing and responding to emergencies and disasters. A print book was developed as a limited-run resource for county Extension offices, county emergency management agency (EMA) offices, and other strategic partners. The handbook was then created as a digital resource on the ACES website (as html pages and downloadable pdfs) and as a digital book available for free on iBooks.

#### ***DESCRIBE THE PROJECT'S MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT***

Content for the Emergency Handbook was determined in several ways. First, we looked at what resources that we received the most requests for from Extension field staff and the general public during a disaster. Next, we evaluated what existing content we had that could be repurposed or reformatted for use in the Emergency Handbook.

Next, we focused the content in two broad categories: preparedness and recovery. We believed that the public would find the Emergency Handbook easier to use with this delineation.

Finally, the Emergency Handbook content allowed Alabama Extension professionals present a unified message on a number of disaster-related topics. This is particularly crucial when communications challenges may limit the effectiveness of a single spokesperson.

#### ***DESCRIBE THE TYPE AND SIZE OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE:***

The audience for the handbook is residents of Alabama who have been involved in emergency situations or disasters or who could be. The targeted audience for the print copies of the handbook is local government, community leaders, county emergency management agency (EMA) offices, first responders, and educators. This secondary would help distribute the information to the primary audience—the residents.

**DESCRIBE THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT'S MARKETING AND PROMOTION:**

Four copies of the handbook were sent to each county Extension office. One was to be kept in that office, one was given to the county EMA office, and the other two were to be given to community leaders identified in that county.

- Exhibits were created and taken to national and regional conferences and other meetings.
- Promo cards with augmented reality were distributed.
- The content was also made available online at [www.aces.edu/emergency](http://www.aces.edu/emergency). This website was promoted on all related materials.
- Promoted on Extension Daily.com
- Press releases were sent to daily and weekly newspapers and TV stations
- Promoted by our partner WSFA-TV on their newscasts
- Promoted via Facebook using posts, boosted posts, and paid ads and promoted on Twitter
- After the launch of the Emergency Handbook, any press releases that related to severe weather or other emergencies include a final paragraph directing people to where they can find or download the Emergency Handbook.

**DESCRIBE EACH ENTRANT'S ROLE:** David McCormick, Multimedia Producer, was the designer. Bruce Dupree, Manager, Creative Services, was the art director/contributor. Maggie Lawrence, Manager, News, worked with the media and coordinated the promotion. Emery Tschetter, Director, Communications & Marketing, was involved with the initial planning, project coordination, promotion, and distribution. Aimee Lewis, Manager, Marketing, was editor and job manager.

**IF THE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, EXPLAIN TO WHAT EXTENT THE PROJECT MET ITS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

The handbook has been downloaded by the public and has been used by law enforcement. It is also being used and endorsed by emergency managers. The handbook is also being used in other states. In particular, the Emergency Handbook received widespread use by Clemson Extension professional during their historic flooding event in 2015.

**DIVERSITY:**

An effort was made to present informative material appropriate to the needs of and accessible to all Alabamians, exclusive of none. Attention was paid to the use of accessible language that is clear, straightforward, and free of stereotypes and generalizations. Images used are a representation of Alabama's diverse population.

**OTHER INFORMATION SUCH AS PRODUCTION COSTS, SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FACED DURING PRODUCTION OR ANY OTHER DETAILS THE JUDGE SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING YOUR ENTRY:**

The colorful handbook is designed to be accessible and easy to navigate. It is broken down into two units: Preparation and Recovery. The content is presented in short, easy to read paragraphs and bulleted lists. Each module is designed to be brief, most being 1 to 2 pages long. The color palette used in one often associated with emergencies: black, red, and yellow. The handbook was created in electronic format because people are more likely to keep their mobile device on hand than a paper book in an emergency.