

# PRESS RELEASE

## KANE COUNTY OFFICE of EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Preparing for Severe Winter Weather

The National Weather Service is forecasting the winter of 2011-2012 will be “colder and wetter than average”. Long range weather forecasts from AccuWeather are indicating the Chicago area could see 50 to 58 inches of snow this winter compared to the 56 inches of snow we received last winter. This is all due to a persistent La Nina weather pattern.

With these predictions in mind, as well as the February 2011 blizzard still fresh in our memory, the Kane County Office of Emergency Management has enhanced the County’s severe winter storm plans to include new technologies and procedures to better coordinate a county-wide response while improving communication with the public.

“With enhanced coordination of information and resources before and during a winter storm event, Kane County and its municipalities will be better prepared to serve the public during any severe winter storm,” said Don Bryant, Director of the Office of Emergency Management.

To provide effective planning coordination prior to the onset of a severe winter storm the OEM will conduct county wide briefings with municipal officials utilizing a Homeland Security web based conferencing tool. This tool will allow the County, and our community partners, to share pre-storm related information from the National Weather Service and collaborate on a county-wide response.

During the storm, the OEM will use an emergency management program that will serve as a central depository for up-to-date, real-time information that can be shared among County and municipal officials. This will help to improve the decision making process and better coordinate resources in response to the storm.

As with any major incident, providing information to the public is vital to promote public safety. To enhance communication with the public prior to and during a winter storm the OEM will use a number of new tools including; utilization of the “emergency alerts” and “road closures” feature on the County’s new website and the use of social media such as Twitter (@KaneCountyOEM). Informational releases to the media will also be used to keep the public informed.