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For Immediate Release  
April 29, 2015

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**State Emergency Management Asks Arizonans to Phone-A-Friend for PrepareAthon**

PHOENIX—You know that feeling of accomplishment you get when you ace a test, nail a job interview or negotiate a “steal of a deal” on a new car? Well, it’s a feeling that the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA) thinks you can also get from preparing for emergencies.

In observance of PrepareAthon! Day of Action on Thursday, April 30, DEMA wants the public to know the self-confidence that comes from being better prepared, and all it takes is a phone call.

During a disaster, it may be easier to call long distance than across town. An Out-of-Town Contact is someone who those in your family can call or text in an emergency to let them know they are safe.

On April 30, DEMA asks all Arizonans to:

1) **CALL** or text the Out-of-Town Contact listed in your Family Communication Plan. If you don't have a Family Communication Plan, download a template from Ready.gov at <http://1.usa.gov/1p6Xnvc>.

2) **TELL** us where their Out-of-Town Contact lives by either completing our online form at <http://bit.ly/1gPliGo> or sending a tweet to [@AzEIN](https://twitter.com/AzEIN) with *only* the city/town and state. Please include the hashtags #PhoneAFriend and #PrepareAthon. Do not send any personal information such as names or addresses.

DEMA will pin the locations to a Google Map as proof that Arizona takes “getting prepared” serious.

If you don’t have an Out-of-Town Contact, it's as easy as calling or texting a friend or relative who lives in another state, asking them to be to your family’s contact (and maybe offering to be theirs in return), and updating your Family Communication Plan. A Family Communication Plan details where your family will reunite and how your family will stay connected in the event of an emergency.

“The act of getting prepared is about taking measured steps,” said DEMA Deputy Director Wendy Smith-Reeve. “You don’t have to write a plan, build a kit and join Citizen Corps all in one weekend, but you do need to be proactive and persistent in your preparations.”

PrepareAthon! is a nationwide campaign meant to improve public understanding of disasters, motivate preparedness action, and inspire community resilience planning.

*Visit the Arizona Emergency Information Network at [www.AzEIN.gov](http://www.AzEIN.gov) for official emergency updates, preparedness and hazard information, and multimedia resources.*