



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Kim Hilsenbeck, Communications Manager  
512.395.4214 | [Kim.Hilsenbeck@co.hays.tx.us](mailto:Kim.Hilsenbeck@co.hays.tx.us)

## Emergency Preparedness Fair Celebrating Five Years of Training Community in Self-sufficiency

**Hays County, Texas** – The Hays County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is gearing up for its fifth annual Emergency Preparedness Fair on September 10. The event theme, “Ready. Prep. Go.”, is a call to be ready for any emergency that comes your way through being prepared. This year’s Title Sponsor is H-E-B.

As in years past, attendees can take useful classes, learn how to make a preparedness kit, and hear from experts about how to be ready to face most any emergency, such as floods, freezes, tornados, hurricanes, and fires. Just in the past three or four years, Hays County has experienced flooding, a devastating freeze and wildfires exacerbated by extreme drought.

“The fifth-year anniversary in marriages traditionally is for gifts made of wood, known for its strength,” said Emergency Services Office Director Mike Jones. “We’re helping to build a stronger, more resilient community through self-sufficiency, preparedness and a willingness to take care of yourself and your family in the event of a disaster or emergency.”

Jones cited the February 2021 “snowmageddon” that hit Central Texas and knocked out power and water for days on end as just one reason to attend the fair.

“We had county residents living in homes without running water, without any power, and in some cases, unable to get any food,” he said. “How can we help people to be better prepared for that kind of emergency?”

Jones also recalled the Memorial Day and October floods of 2015 that devastated much of the county.

“The Preparedness Fair can help people know how to handle most any crisis,” he said. “Being prepared means having supplies on hand, knowing what to do, and providing help to those in need.”

In thinking about being ready for just about anything, Michelle Villegas, the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for Hays County, asked, “Could you help your neighbors until first responders arrived if there was an emergency or weather-related incident?”

Villegas, a former Air Force nurse, said the family-friendly event offers useful, relevant information along with vendors, food trucks, and live performances by local school bands, plus a raffle and silent auction. Proceeds from the raffle and silent auction benefit BR3T and the Hays County Fire Chief’s Association, respectively.

This year’s fair features a variety of first responders and their apparatus from around Hays County, the chance to see helicopters take off and land, as well as demonstrations and classes.

Attendees can also learn about the county's emergency alert system ([WarnCentralTexas.Org](http://WarnCentralTexas.Org)), talk to first responders, and find out more about the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

"Knowing what do to in an emergency can mean the difference between life and death," said OES Assistant Director and CERT Program Administrator, Brandon High. "Being prepared gives people the confidence to help their family and neighbors until first responders arrive. Becoming a CERT member is an excellent way for Hays County residents to learn to be resourceful and prepared for just about anything."

Vendors and demonstrators will offer the following:

- What documents to take in case of an evacuation
- How to best care for your pets during an emergency
- Insurance coverage and financial issues after a crisis
- How to identify edible plants and flowers
- Building a "go bag" if you need to evacuate your home

For more information about the Hays County Emergency Preparedness Fair, visit <https://haysinformed.com>. The event takes place on Saturday, Sept. 10 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hays CISD Performing Arts Center in Kyle.

Community support through sponsorships are welcome. Interested in hosting a booth or donating a silent auction item? Contact Michelle Villegas at [Michelle.Villegas@co.hays.tx.us](mailto:Michelle.Villegas@co.hays.tx.us).

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