

# STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
George Epp, Director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Governor Proclaims April 15 – 21, 2007 Severe Weather Awareness Week in Colorado**

(DENVER) – Governor Bill Ritter has declared April 15 – 21, 2007, Colorado Severe Weather Awareness Week noting that, "...experience has demonstrated that a well-informed and prepared public...can reduce the loss of life and damage to property when threatened by Colorado's severe weather extremes."

Colorado Division of Emergency Management Director George Epp stresses that preparedness begins with each and every Colorado resident. "This is an opportunity to educate people on severe weather threats and safety precautions. All the warnings and watches don't mean a thing if people don't know where to go for information, or how to respond to a tornado, or what actions should be taken in a flood situation. Folks need a plan of action and they need to know the appropriate safety precautions to react quickly in a severe weather emergency."

Spring in Colorado can bring severe storms which often produce damaging hail, extremely high winds, devastating tornadoes and flash flooding. Thunderstorms and flooding in 1997 resulted in five fatalities in Fort Collins and a presidential disaster declaration for 13 counties. Intense thunderstorms in April of 1999 resulted in another presidential disaster declaration. Nationally, flash floods result in 146 deaths annually.

Hail has caused property and agricultural damage across the nation to the tune of almost \$1 billion. In July of 1990, Denver suffered an estimated \$625 million in damages from a single storm. Colorado ranks ninth in the United States for frequency of tornadoes, 38th for number of tornado deaths, 31st for injuries, and 30th for cost of tornado damages. The March tornado that devastated the southeastern Colorado town of Holly, killing one, had winds up to 165 mph as it cut a 15-mile swath of destruction through Prowers County. It was the first fatal tornado in Colorado since 1960, and only the second Category 3 tornado to hit southern Colorado since 1995. The path of damage was 600 feet wide.

Drought, extreme heat, landslides, lightning, and wildfires are also concerns in Colorado's climate. Coloradans can prepare for severe weather, help lessen the damage and destruction it causes, and help protect their lives and property if they are aware of precautions they can take before and during severe weather events.

The Colorado Division of Emergency Management is teaming with the National Weather Service and local emergency managers for this 2007 Severe Weather Awareness Week. For information on what Coloradans can do to take responsibility and prepare for disasters, visit the Colorado Division of Emergency Management website at: <http://dola.colorado.gov/dem/> and click on "Severe Weather Awareness Week."

NOAA's National Weather Service websites have an abundance of severe weather information:

NWS in Boulder: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/den/>; NWS in Grand Junction: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/gjt/>; NWS in Pueblo: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/pub/>; and NWS in Goodland, Kansas: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/gld/>.

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