

INTRODUCTION

What exactly is a disaster? A disaster is an occurrence such as a tornado, flood, blizzard, ice storm, chemical spill, pandemic or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

Disasters can occur anytime and anywhere, with or without warning. After the June floods last year, there was serious flooding again in November 2006 that affected some portions of Delaware and a larger area of Broome County. The Town of Colchester disaster just this past month is an example of a very serious type of disaster that struck with almost no advance warning. We can reduce the stress, chaos and cost of disasters by taking deliberate but simple steps to be prepared.

This *Guide* is designed to provide households in Delaware County with both the tools and the resources that will empower them to:

- 1] Prepare for a disaster at home, work or at school.
- 2] Respond effectively to a disaster when they occur.
- 3] Recover from the physical and emotional trauma caused by a disaster.

This *Guide* is filled with information sources that will take you to web sites, give you telephone numbers, provide you with government and agency information as well as other useful resources. By using this *Guide*, individuals and households can acquire a significant amount of knowledge and expand the awareness of the many ways they can prepare and protect family, friends, their home and community.

We urge you to use this *Guide* so you can be ready and be prepared! One thing we all agree on when evaluating Delaware's state of readiness for the next disaster, there will be a next disaster and it will probably come sooner than we think. We hope you will follow Ms. Reagon's suggestion below:

When I see trouble coming, I go on up ahead to meet it.
Bernice Johnson Reagon