



Contact: Dawn M. Shiley, MA, CAE  
IAEM Communications & Marketing Director  
703-538-3542

**IAEM Headquarters**  
201 Park Washington Court  
Falls Church, VA  
22046-4527 USA  
[www.iaem.org](http://www.iaem.org)

## News Release

### IAEM-USA Announces the 2023 Preparedness Award

**Oct. 19, 2023 (Falls Church, Va.)** – The IAEM-USA Awards & Recognition Committee of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) has selected Dare County Emergency Management for the IAEM-USA 2023 Preparedness Award. The award will be presented at the President’s Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Nov. 8 at the 71<sup>st</sup> IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Long Beach, California.

#### **Dare County (NC) Emergency Management 2023 IAEM-USA Preparedness Award**

The Love the Beach, Respect the Ocean (LTBRTO) campaign initiated by Dare County Emergency Management is a remarkable and impactful effort in the field of emergency management. It addresses critical vulnerabilities related to ocean hazards, focusing on rip currents, extreme heat, severe weather, and other beach-related risks affecting millions of Outer Banks visitors.

This comprehensive campaign takes a holistic approach to inform and empower beachgoers, ensuring they are aware of potential hazards and equipped with the knowledge to stay safe. The multi-faceted marketing strategy, which includes an informative website, mass notification system, partnerships with local businesses, and innovative use of QR codes and radio ads, demonstrates the commitment to reaching a diverse audience effectively.

The campaign's success is evident in the decline of rip current drownings and near-miss rescues, showcasing its positive impact on beach safety. Furthermore, the collaboration among various stakeholders, including municipalities, lifeguard agencies, tourism bureaus, and more, highlights the whole-of-community approach to mitigate ocean hazards.

The LTBRTO campaign addresses immediate safety concerns and focuses on educating visitors, emphasizing positive empowerment over fear. Its model, which leverages existing mass alerting and notification platforms, can serve as an exemplary framework for other regions dealing with various hazards.

The willingness to share this successful model without proprietary restrictions underscores the commitment to public safety and highlights the potential for replication in other communities facing different hazards. The Dare County Emergency Management team has set a commendable example for proactive and effective emergency management practices, making them deserving winners of the prestigious Preparedness Award.

**The Preparedness Award** recognizes outstanding accomplishments in Preparedness activities and services for constituencies served.

*IAEM-USA, the nation's largest emergency management professional association, is a non-profit professional organization representing more than 5,800 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance, the Certified Emergency Manager program, annual scholarships, a comprehensive monthly newsletter, and more.*

###