#2124: Best Practices in Disaster Public Communications

**Poster Showcase**

**Research Question**
How can public agencies communicate disaster information to the public in ways that build trust and engender appropriate action?

**Methodology**
Literature review and interviews

**Overcome Distrust of Government**
Political environment
COVID racial disparities
George Floyd = decreased trust in police

**Deter Milling - Dennis Mileti**
- Official evacuation order
- People check with neighbors, traditional media - radio, TV, newspaper
- Social media now another resource
  - Self correcting?
- Official versus Nextdoor, Waze; conflict

**Best Practices Motivate Action**
- Be Specific
- Pre-event outreach and education are essential to build trust
- Where to go?
- What to bring?
  - Shelter supplies
  - Critical documents
  - Special needs issues
  - Pets
- Report to work? Disaster Service Worker?

**Basic Rules**
- Regular, reliable communication from public safety agencies, elected officials
- Clear, concise, consistent
- Accurate maps
- Repetition of message
- Community languages and cultural competency

**Outreach**
- Fire behavior – up hill fast, downhill slower, fire makes its own weather.
  - CERT – neighborhood coordination
  - Stay and defend - what are your exit routes?
  - Educate community on dangers of heat – engines stop, air filters clog, tires melt

**Findings: List of 19 Best Practices**
- Benefits emergency managers, PIOs, first responders

**Proposed Cell Phone App (white paper)**
- Single source for collected information, limits milling
- Official announcements, social media data scraping sorted by using Big Data and AI functions
- Geo fenced and time limited (current) data collection to ensure relevance to emergency response decision making

**Technology**
- Communication limitations – cell phones fail early, IPAWS/WEA over-notify
- Mountainous terrain can block signals; ham radio, MURS radio, where to go for a signal?
- NOAA weather radio. Add sirens?

**Unpublished photo, Sgt. Galen Yusufzai-Boggs, CNG**

**SJSU IRB exempt; www.transweb.sjsu.edu**

**Powell, A. (2015, July 8). North Fire Shuts Down 15 FWY., ABC 7.**

**Diskin, M. (2019, April 28). California Towns at Risk From Fires Often Have Few Ways Out. Ventura County Star.**

**Frannie Edwards**

**MTI/TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE**

**Competitive Division: Academic**

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