



TOGETHER. HELPING IOWANS.

Safeguard Iowa Partnership Helps Businesses with Recovery Plans

There is an old adage in emergency management that organizations tend to prepare for the last disaster they faced. When Jeff Scherrman walked into a disaster recovery workshop last spring, he thought his recovery plan was already well developed and under control. After all, as president of Acme Graphics Inc., he had worked through the difficult process of getting his business back on its feet following the devastating floods that swamped Cedar Rapids in 2008. Little did he know that the workshop, sponsored by the Business Success Initiative of the Cedar Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and the Safeguard Iowa Partnership, would open his eyes to the steps he had yet to take to build a truly solid recovery plan.

"Once I got there, it brought up so much information I hadn't thought about," Scherrman said. "I thought I was knowledgeable, but the planning template presented at the workshop broke it down into many components – communication, production, accounting - so many things we had not considered."

That was the whole idea behind the workshop, which was attended by several dozen owners of small and medium-sized businesses based in Cedar Rapids. "We wanted to give them something they could take home and use to build a plan," said Bob Harschnek, case manager team leader of the Chamber's Business Success Initiative.

That is where Safeguard Iowa Partnership stepped in. "I took some of the tools and templates available from FEMA and other sources and made them relevant to Iowa," said Jami Haberl, executive director of Safeguard Iowa Partnership.

The businesses were given a workbook to help guide them through the process of developing a solid business continuity plan.

"We talked about the different hazards and threats the businesses could face, and included and emphasized the public information function," Haberl explained. At the workshop, businesses started working on the template,

and were given a mentor from the Chamber to help complete the process. From the time spent on disaster planning at last spring's workshop, Scherrman said he now has a better all-hazards plan in place.

"We are not just thinking about floods, but also fire and tornados," Scherrman said.

His company has digitized its information, which has been backed up and stored for retrieval in the case of an emergency. Acme Graphics has also created a secured list of customers, employees and vendors who can be quickly contacted following a disaster.

To complete the preparedness cycle, Acme Graphics has also conducted a dry run exercise to test the plan. That exercise, along with other steps, makes Acme a business that is now better prepared for the next disaster.

"Small and medium-sized businesses are essential to our communities; therefore it's critical for them to prepare for disasters that may impact their ability to operate," Haberl explained.

To access a free copy of the business continuity work plan and template, register to become a mentor or request a mentor's assistance, visit www.safeguardiowa.org/business-continuity-planning.



The Safeguard Iowa Partnership is a 501c3 nonprofit involving government, private-sector, higher education and nonprofit organizations. Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of Iowa to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration.

TOGETHER. HELPING IOWANS.

100 E. GRAND
SUITE 165
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

515-246-1707 OFFICE
515-770-4637 MOBILE
515-246-1701 FAX

SIP@SAFEGUARDIOWA.ORG
WWW.SAFEGUARDIOWA.ORG
WWW.TWITTER.COM/SAFEGUARDIOWA

© 2011 Safeguard Iowa Partnership