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News Release

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Wisconsin's Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week April 9-13, 2018

The week of April 9-13, 2018, is Wisconsin's Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week. The Portage County Sheriff's Office, through its Emergency Management Division and its Communications Center play a key role in severe weather preparedness.

To help exercise the system, statewide tornado drills are scheduled for Thursday, April 12th. Schools, businesses, families, and individuals have two opportunities to test their emergency plans during these drills. These exercises assist to encourage everyone in Wisconsin to be ready for possible tornadoes and severe weather.

In 2017, there were 23 tornado touchdowns in the state. One tornado on May 16th followed an 83 mile path across Polk, Barron, Rusk, and Price counties, killing one person and causing widespread damage. The state also experienced an outbreak of 10 tornadoes on June 14, 2017, across Shawano, Winnebago, Outagamie, Brown, and Waushara counties.

On April 12th, a mock tornado watch will be issued at 1:00 p.m., followed by a statewide mock tornado warning at 1:45 p.m. Radio and TV stations across the state will issue the test tornado warnings to help test the communications system. In addition, mock alerts will be issued on NOAA Weather Radios and the Sheriff's Office Communications Center will activate municipal tornado sirens to test their emergency severe weather plans. Later, a mock tornado warning will be issued at 6:45 p.m. to give families and second shift workers a chance to practice their emergency plans as well.

The tornado drill will take place even if the sky is cloudy, dark or rainy. If actual severe storms are expected in the state on Thursday, April 12th, the tornado drills will be postponed until Friday, April 13th with the same times. If severe storms are possible Friday, the drills will be cancelled.

Any changes will be issued to local media as well as posted on the ReadyWisconsin website at <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. Updates will also be posted on Facebook and Twitter

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