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## **IAEM Joins Safe America Foundation in Leading 9/11 “Drill Down for Safety” Campaign**

**Falls Church, Va., Sept. 4, 2009** – The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) USA Council will participate in emergency communication drills and shelter in place drills this Sept. 11 as part of a national campaign encouraging organizations to rehearse what they would do during a natural disaster or other form of emergency.

The campaign, created by the Safe America Foundation, includes corporations, organizations and individuals across the United States, who pledged to practice on Sept. 11 how they would communicate during an emergency. The campaign, called “Pledge to Drill,” launches on Sept. 11 in conjunction with National Preparedness Month.

“IAEM-USA has always been an advocate for employee safety and emergency preparedness,” said **Russ Decker, CEM, IAEM-USA President**. “Through this partnership with Safe America, we’re supporting efforts to provide information and tools that will help individuals plan and prepare for communicating in the event of an emergency.”

The “Pledge to Drill” 9/11 campaign will also focus on social media tools like Twitter and Facebook, which can help keep families and friends in touch if voice networks are knocked off line. Individuals can sign up at [www.safeamericaprepared.com](http://www.safeamericaprepared.com) to pledge to drill and then post post-drill ‘success stories’ online and compete for prizes and recognition.

As part of the campaign, The Safe America Foundation is working with wireless carriers to focus on non-voice communications, including SMS text messaging. In emergencies where digital communications may go down, text messages may still get through or be held in the queue for delivery. Because having parents learn how to text is a valuable safety tool, Safe America will offer texting lessons from a newly-created [www.safeamericaprepared.org](http://www.safeamericaprepared.org) web site.

In addition, “Pledge to Drill” focuses on the importance of educating children about how to communicate in adverse situations. As part of this, Safe America is urging parents to have their children pre-load emergency URLs and messages into their mobile devices, as well as set up text messaging templates that can speed up communications and provide immediate access during an emergency.

“Much as been written about how to stockpile food and water during a crisis, but we want Americans to think about how they’d communicate if phone lines were down or networks go offline. How they’d get in touch with loved ones is a critical issue, as we learned during Katrina. We want families to plan now how they will communicate, and have the tools like texting – or newer ones like Twitter and Facebook – loaded into their phones and mobile devices, ready to use in an emergency,” said Norman J. Mineta, former Secretary of Transportation and Honorary Chairman of the “Pledge to Drill” campaign. Secretary Mineta played a pivotal role on 9/11 and in the investigation that followed.

## **IAEM-USA News Release**

Sept. 4, 2009

Page 2

Secretary Mineta will join other non-profit and corporate leaders in kicking off the program on Sept. 1 at USA Today Headquarters for a "Pledge to Drill" luncheon. Other national non-profits participating include: the National Emergency Managers Association, the American Logistics Aid Network, the U.S. Medical Reserve Corps, the National Association of Government Communicators, the National Association of State EMS Officers, the National Association of EMTs, and the National Volunteer Fire Corps.

"We're delighted with the response to-date, before we have even gone public," Pagano noted. "Safe America believes that individuals are the missing link in preparedness. Through this program, we will annually involve millions – teaching them that in an emergency, *they* are their own first responder."

*The "Pledge to Drill" communications project was created by the Safe America Foundation, a suburban Atlanta-based 501C-3 that has worked on a variety of preparedness programs with the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA over the past seven years. Learn more at [www.safeamericaprepared.com](http://www.safeamericaprepared.com).*

*The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), which has more than 5,000 members in 58 countries, is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting the goals of saving lives and protecting property during emergencies and disasters. 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. Learn about the work of IAEM at [www.iaem.com](http://www.iaem.com).*