In 2007, a small group of Nevada water and wastewater utilities, with the support from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) joined together to create the NvWARN. The group developed a secure website, adopted a set of administrative procedures, a memorandum of understanding, and suggested ordinances for local board approval for future members. Since that initial meeting, the organization has grown to include 20 utilities statewide.

**What is NvWARN?**

Nevada’s Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (NvWARN) is a formal system of “utilities helping utilities” by mutual aid during emergencies. The Web-driven system consists of a secure data bank of available resources and a practical mutual aid agreement designed to reduce bureaucratic red tape in times of emergencies.

The purpose is to get member agencies the tools, equipment and human resources support that can help assess and assist an impacted water or wastewater system member as quickly as possible until a permanent solution to the emergency may be implemented.

WARN systems have demonstrated that a network of “utilities helping utilities” is the best method for responding to the immediate water and wastewater emergencies.

**How did NvWARN get started?**

Following Hurricane Katrina, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Presidential Directive identified WARN programs that are forming across the country as critical to the nation’s infrastructure. Nevada’s Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (NvWARN) was developed under the auspices of the North American Water and Wastewater Utilities Response Network (NDEP) and the Regional Emergency Planning and Response Management (REPRAM) program.

**How does NvWARN work if there is an emergency?**

The program is designed to assist NvWARN members respond to a local emergency when they, themselves, do not have the necessary resources. Each member of NvWARN is asked to provide a list of all the emergency response equipment in their inventory. The NvWARN member in need then contacts the member agency by e-mail or by telephone for the equipment and/or people needed to respond to their particular emergency. This innovative process allows member utilities to match the available resources to the request for assistance quickly, when time is critical for a response.

Another emerging use of the NvWARN is support for the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). This organization, formed in 1996, allows individual states to request aid from other states. Most recently, the system was used when two hurricanes wreaked havoc in the southeastern part of the United States.

**How is NvWARN funded?**

NvWARN was originally funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Today the program is self-sufficient through in-kind services. There are no membership fees.

**NvWARN benefits**

The goal of NvWARN is to provide services to member utilities and encourage more participation by utilities across the state. The advantages of belonging to the organization are many.

- Increased planning and coordination
- Enhanced access to specialized resources
- Information exchange
- Expedited arrival of aid and personnel in an emergency
- Reduced administrative conflicts
- Resource inventory and availability status
- Identification of AWWA professional crew listings
- Access to water and wastewater professionals with training and experience to help solve emergency situations

**Becoming a member**

To become an NvWARN member, visit the NvWARN.org website and complete the “Membership Interest Form.” Ultimately, the local governing board for each agency must adopt the Mutual Aid Agreement and the NvWARN bylaws. General information about the program is also available at NvWARN.org.

**NvWARN a regional player**

The national WARN program consists of 10 geographic regions. Nevada participates in Region IX which, in addition to Nevada, consists of the States of Arizona, California and Hawaii. As the statewide programs continue to grow, the regions will provide an opportunity for the interchange of ideas and multistate participation in emergency exercises. NvWARN members are already meeting with WARN members from Arizona and California. But, most importantly, the goal is for the regions to allow for interstate assistance in the event participating members need emergency assistance.

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