

From: [Leah D. Nixon](#)
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Included below is a press release regarding Ferris State University's designation as a StormReady University by the National Weather Service. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Ferris Named StormReady by National Weather Service

BIG RAPIDS – When a storm hits, are you ready? Ferris State University students, faculty and staff will be: Ferris will be recognized as a StormReady University by the National Weather Service at 6 p.m. on Nov. 18 in West Commons-Room 109.

Ferris is one of only four universities in Michigan to receive this special acknowledgment.

“Ferris has done a great job of implementing emergency notification systems as well as putting emphasis on emergency preparedness in general,” said Tricia Walding-Smith, assistant director of Emergency Management in the department of Public Safety at Ferris.

Campus emergency preparedness at Ferris was studied in Spring 2009 by students in Dr. Tom Behler's Sociology of Emergencies and Disasters class. As part of a class project, Ferris students Megan Bolter, Matt Smith, Tyler Frederick and Monica Dean initiated the StormReady application process. Walding-Smith worked with the students to gather information and evaluate the university's readiness for weather-related emergencies.

“This is a very good example of success in our inclusion of students in emergency planning and them finding very worthwhile solutions,” Ferris Police Chief Martin Bledsoe said. “The Ferris emergency preparedness effort includes students, faculty and staff at different levels. Dr. Behler and his students are applauded for taking weather readiness elements of education and response to a new plateau at Ferris.”

Walding-Smith also assisted National Weather Service professionals and local emergency managers with a site visit to verify the information, evaluate Ferris' capabilities and approve the recognition.

“Before we knew we qualified, we thought (the project) would be a good way to gauge Ferris' Emergency Operations Center to that of other universities and look to a higher standard of preparedness,” she said.

Ferris completed a set of rigorous warning criteria necessary to earn the distinction of being StormReady. Emergency systems used on the Ferris campus include emergency text alerts, an outdoor broadcast system, emergency phone alerts, a computer alert messaging system,

electronic signs, phone fan out, and alerts on the Ferris homepage.

Ferris also has several methods of monitoring and receiving severe weather information including an on-campus weather and radar system, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio, Big Rapids Emergency Dispatch Center and Amateur Radio.

StormReady encourages communities to take a new, proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness. The program is voluntary and provides communities with clear-cut advice from a partnership between local National Weather Service forecast offices and state and local emergency managers.

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