Sirens for Erie, Colorado: A Change in Policy

Lauren Hill

WAS*IS Summer Workshop 2010
Overview:

1. The Need for Sirens: (in Erie, CO and elsewhere)

2. The Challenges of Siren Policy

3. Looking to the Future, ways to mitigate these challenges
I. The Need for Sirens: (in Erie, CO and elsewhere)

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"

- REDUNDANCY
  - In addition to other warning means i.e. NOAA weather radio, reverse 9-11 phone system and text alerts, TV local radio
  - System backup, Solar battery backup
I. The Need for Sirens (Part 2):
(in Erie, CO & elsewhere)

Historical relevance in social consciousness

- Startling aspect- take notice!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lU3He9Idobo
I. The Need for Sirens (part 3): (in Erie, CO and elsewhere)

- Socioeconomic equalizer
  - Esp. important for “high risk” communities

non-discriminatory towards wealth
II. The Challenges of Siren Policy:

- Fighting the misconceptions about tornado frequency and occurrence
- Challenging the status quo, “it’s always been this way”
  - Navigating the channels of legislation
  - Lack of Funding
- Policy Inconsistencies:
  - When to sound?
  - Discrepancies in Alert Modes- different meanings
Tornado Misconceptions:

“It Can’t Happen Here”

Photograph courtesy of Topeka Capital-Journal.
JOSEPH G. GALWAY, National Severe Storms Forecast Center,
Weather Bureau, ESSA, Kansas City, Missouri
The Colorado Front Range
Windsor, CO
Tornado; May 22, 2008
EF 3 Rated by NWS
Lake George Tornado, Park County CO Aug. 2009
Pop. Demographics Erie, CO

- Hispanic - 692 (11.0%)

http://www.city-data.com/city/Erie-Colorado.html#ixzzowKHzbI5h
II. The Challenges of Siren Policy:

- Fighting the misconceptions about tornado frequency and occurrence
- Challenging the status quo, “it’s always been this way”
  - Navigating the channels of legislation
  - Lack of Funding
    - Inadequate coverage... “Outdoor Warning System”
- Policy Inconsistencies:
  - When to sound?
  - Discrepancies in Alert Modes- different meanings
When to Sound?

- When the EOC spots a funnel? (everyday at noon?)
- Tornado Warning issued by the NWS
- High wind events- (i.e. winds in excess of 70 mph)
- Tornado Sightings only?

- Fire Call
- Flood Warnings
i.e. Wichita Falls, TX Siren Activation:

“a verified report of a tornado within the City limits OR a verified report of a tornado that will be entering the City limits”

“a verified report of sustained winds at or in excess of 58 mph. (The term “sustained” is defined as three minutes long.)”

III. Looking to the Future, ways to mitigate these challenges:

- Grassroots support, community awareness
  - Funding grants, (DoD, DHS, FEMA) mechanical v. electronic - bidding
- Policy Change- should there be a legislated national standard?
- Restoration and Recycling
- Media Partnerships
Town of Erie, CO:

- i.e. of grassroots support for siren policy, HOA (Home owners association), petition Town legislators

- Intergovernmental partnership with BOEM, Boulder Office Of Emergency Management
Media Partnerships:

“Many Counties Without Tornado Sirens 2 Of Heaviest Hit Areas In State Have No Sirens”- Jeremy Finley


Northglenn-Thornton Sentinel talks tornado sirens”

http://www.thorntonweather.com/blog/thornton-weather/northglenn-thornton-sentinel-talks-tornado-sirens/
RESTORATION:

Above left: Federal Signal Model 2s and 5s, SH-10, Thunderbolts, Phantom Allertors

Below left: EOWs

Below right: Whelen Vortex Rs
Sources: