



**ONLINE MASTER'S DEGREE IN STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS**

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON DC

Click to Learn more >>



2009 Gold Quill Awards  
Now Accepting Entries

Print This Article

<< Return to [ReadyPA prepares for a disaster](#)

## ReadyPA prepares for a disaster

[Craig McGuire](#)

December 10 2008

When the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) was conceiving ReadyPA, a campaign to motivate Pennsylvanians to prepare for a disaster, it faced a daunting challenge.

“When you are working on campaigns to get people to take steps to do anything, like quitting smoking or preparing for emergency, it's an uphill battle,” says Kim Lehman, VP at Neiman Group, the agency retained for the launch.

### Strategy

“It's one thing to learn about the types of supplies you need in a news-paper or on TV,” Lehman says. “But, when your audience can get your message in a setting where they can actually take that step in building an emergency supply kit by purchasing a flashlight or non-perishable food items, that's powerful.”

Wal-Mart signed on to add an in-store promotional element to the national “Ready” effort model created by The Ad Council and US Department of Homeland Security.

“The task of preparing for emergencies can suddenly move to the top of someone's to-do list and actually be done,” Lehman says.

### Tactics

The launch was scheduled for September to coincide with both National Preparedness Month and the peak of the hurricane season.

Beginning September 15, 30- and 60-second radio DJ reads played in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

All 84 Pennsylvania Wal-Mart Supercenter stores featured a four-way display with key items, signage, and informational hand-outs, including an emergency-kit checklist.

ReadyPA's launch unveiled readypa.org and TV PSAs at a press conference staged at a firehouse in state capital Harrisburg, PA.

The event, publicized by media outreach, featured speakers like PEMA director Robert French.

### **Results**

The Web site launched the same week as the effort, and went from no traffic to a high of 2,300 unique visitors by September 15. Since mid-September, there have been more than 10,200 unique visits and more than 50,000 page views.

“Our partnership with the Neiman Group and the retail giant Wal-Mart really allowed us to rapidly expand the visibility,” French says.

The launch garnered significant coverage on stations in Harrisburg, PA; and Pittsburgh. These placements had a viewing audience of more than half a million.

Following the event, ReadyPA was featured in daily newspapers around the state, Lehman adds.

### **Future**

The team will continue with outreach and updating the Web site, but Wal-Mart was only a partner for the launch, Lehman says.

### ***PRWeek View***

*By putting up displays at all 84 heavily trafficked Wal-Mart locations, the [readypa.org](http://readypa.org) Web site was able to garner a dramatic surge in site visitors. It was smart of the team to utilize its Wal-Mart partnership with key items and signage, knowing that its target demographic would be shopping at the store.*

*But the true ROI of this campaign is not measured in page views, but actual lives saved.*

*Ultimately, this campaign is distinctive because it delivered the messaging at the exact moment when the audience is most likely to physically act – in this instance, when purchasing materials to prepare for an emergency.*

**PR team:** Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and Neiman Group (all Harrisburg, PA)

**Campaign:** ReadyPA: Be Informed. Be Prepared. Be Involved.

**Duration:** September 12, 2008-ongoing

**Budget:** \$50,000