

2022 SCAC Awards Program

This application is for:

J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award

Project Title

Know Your Zone Safety Campaign

County/Counties

Dorchester County

Staff Contact

Michelle Mills

Job Title

PIO

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Summerville, SC, 29483

Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.

Last spring, Dorchester County Emergency Management partnered with Tradesman Brewing Company to brew a unique beer that housed a QR code on the label to connect residents to hurricane preparedness information and evacuation routes. The "Know your Zone" beer was featured at the annual Dorchester County Hurricane Preparedness Expo and was also sold at several locations throughout South Carolina. As a result, this innovative hurricane preparedness project garnered national attention and was even modeled by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:

Name	Title	Email
Michelle Mills	PIO	mmills@dorchestercountysc.gov
Dave Amann	Emergency Management Specialist	DAmann@dorchestercountysc.gov
Mario Formisano	Deputy County Administrator for Public Safety	mformisano@dorchestercountysc.gov

To submit these attachments online, please upload Microsoft Word or PDF documents below.



KnowYourZone.JMG2023.pdf

Please check boxes for attachments you will submit as part of your application

A concise Project Description to explain the purpose and significance of the entry (up to eight pages). Please follow the prescribed naming convention for your Project Description file.

Any additional materials needed to support your application (up to five pages).

J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award applications must include a letter of support from the county council chairperson or county chief administrative officer. Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award applications must include letters of support from the council chairperson or chief administrative officer for EACH participating political subdivision.

J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD

DORCHESTER COUNTY

KNOW YOUR ZONE SAFETY CAMPAIGN



PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

MARIO FORMISANO, DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
DAVID M. AMANN, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

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Mario Formisano, Dorchester County Deputy County Administrator for Public Safety

mformisano@dorchestercountysc.gov

David M. Amann, Dorchester County Emergency Management Specialist

DAmann@dorchestercountysc.gov

Michelle Mills, Dorchester County Public Information Officer

mmills@dorchestercountysc.gov

Benefit/Importance of Project

Why was this project undertaken? What is the significance of this project to your community as a whole? How does it relate in importance to the other problems in your community?

For the last several years, Emergency Management has been trying to increase hurricane preparedness communication and education in the community. With the influx of residents moving to South Carolina and Dorchester County along with a lull since the last significant hurricane, Emergency Management was interested in developing an innovative hurricane preparedness marketing strategy. At a brainstorming and planning session for the upcoming annual Hurricane Preparedness Expo, a staff member brought up the idea of partnering with a brewery for a seasonal beer that would have a QR code directed to a website with evacuation routes and preparedness information. Just a few short weeks later, Sarah Gayle McConnel of Tradesman Brewing Company along with Holy City Distribution agreed to partner with the county by brewing a one-of-a-kind California Common beer that would be called *Know Your Zone*. The label on the 16-ounce can would promote hurricane awareness. The goal was to showcase the beer at

the annual Hurricane Preparedness Expo that would be taking place at the county's new Ashley River Park on the first Saturday in June 2022.

Due to its location off the coast, the Low Country is often impacted by storms and hurricanes which necessitates the need for residents to prepare emergency kits, locate their evacuation zone, and connect to trusted weather and government updates. Educating the community is an ongoing effort for Emergency Management and for the County. Initially, this safety campaign was thought to connect to a younger demographic within the Dorchester/Charleston area, but it ended up attracting local, state, and national attention which elevated the project and conversation surrounding hurricane preparedness to a broader audience. While a partnership with a brewery for a hurricane beer may seem lighthearted and fun, Dorchester County was grateful that the project created a platform to continue conversations and education surrounding hurricane preparedness.

How much of the county's population benefited by the project? In what specific ways are different groups of citizens within the county better off than before?

While this project was initially focused on educating Dorchester County residents, the surrounding areas were also exposed to local and national news along with extensive social media coverage about the Know Your Zone beer, the Hurricane Preparedness Expo, and the unique partnership with Tradesman Brewing Company. Residents in all three counties, along with other hurricane-affected communities, benefitted by an increased number of hurricane preparedness conversations that highlighted the need to identify their evacuation routes and create emergency preparedness kits.

In partnership with the S.C. Emergency Management Division, each 16-ounce can contains a QR code and URL that directs scanners to hurricane.sc, a resource that the state had created the previous year. This website is a comprehensive and user-friendly portal for South Carolina hurricane preparedness. Scanners are able to connect to South Carolina's hurricane safety resources or download the free S.C. Emergency Manager App that allows for customization of a personal emergency plan, evacuation maps, a share your location option, traffic and weather updates, and more. As this is a valuable resource, the S.C. Emergency Management Division allowed Dorchester County to include their link and QR code on the Know Your Zone beer.

What degree of success did the project attain? What major objectives were achieved? Provide data where possible.

The primary goals were to increase educational awareness within the county and increase the number of people at the Annual Hurricane Expo. Due to declining numbers at the previous Hurricane Preparedness Expo, Emergency Management staff were interested in reenergizing the event to attract more attendees. The Know Your Zone beer ended up being a greater success than staff originally anticipated as it both increased awareness of the *Plan, Prepare, Evacuate* message and provided additional media coverage for the Expo.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, numbers at the 2021 Hurricane Preparedness Expo were approximately 50 people but substantially increased to over 200 attendees for 2022. This increase is partly attributed to holding the Expo at Dorchester County's newly opened Ashley River Park and the additional media coverage that highlighted the debut of the Know Your Zone beer. Lowes Foods and Tradesman Brewing Company attended as partners along with other first responders, organizations, and county departments.

From May 3, 2022, through January 15, 2023, there have been 307 total QR scans and 292 unique scans with most taking place in the summer of 2022. There was an increase in early fall that is attributed to Hurricane Ian. It is also interesting to note that the top scans were represented with New York cell phone numbers which indicates that newer residents may have scanned the QR code.

The County also received a significant number of local media stories that helped to propel the idea to a national conversation. This equated to an average of 534 million in our monthly readership which is the potential reach of unique visitors for the Know Your Zone message (note that this does not include any individual Facebook tagging so the actual number is much higher). This reach was due in part to national coverage from media outlets like AccuWeather, Fox Weather, MSN.com, Novinky, UPI, News Explorer, and Yahoo! News. Catchy titles (*South Carolina using beer to promote hurricane preparedness this season, Brewery serves up refreshing take on hurricane preparedness, Brewery launches educational beer for hurricane season, Emergency officials, Lowcountry brewery team up to promote hurricane safety, and Beer can features QR code to help residents learn hurricane evaluation zone in SC*) conveyed the unique collaboration and prompted much discussion in the weather awareness sphere. In addition, the ad value equivalency (AVE) from partnership viewership and potential reach for messaging hurricane preparedness was \$4.9M which reflects the scope of this project.

As a result of this innovative messaging, FEMA and the Florida Division of Emergency Management both reached out with [Florida announcing their partnership with Proof Brewing Company at the end of February](#). Their beer, Halfway Full is Halfway There, encourages residents to keep gas tanks at least half full during hurricane season so that they are able to evacuate quickly if needed. In addition, Tradesman Brewing Company is currently working with Hurricane Strong, a national hurricane resilience initiative, to place a QR code on the Know Your Zone label that will geo track the location of the scanner and direct them to the appropriate hurricane resources and their evacuation route. This will allow national distribution so residents and visitors along the coast can scan for hurricane preparedness information.

Project Effort/Difficulty

What did your county have to do to accomplish its objectives? If your county worked with another local government or consultant, how was the work divided?

After the brainstorming session, staff reached out to a local Summerville brewery to see if they would be interested in having a conversation about brewing a hurricane beer. While this brewery had to decline due to space and capacity, they recommended that we connect to one of their colleagues at Tradesman Brewing Company.

County staff set up a meeting with Sara Gayle McConnell, co-owner of the brewery, along with Jenn Thorn of Holy City Distribution who all agreed to move forward. This project personally connected with Ms. McConnell who is a lifelong resident of the Low Country and retired neonatal nurse who assisted with emergency planning and evacuations at her hospital during weather events. It was her enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to use her platform and brewery that propelled this project forward.

Within a week, plans were underway for a design of the can, and the S.C. Emergency Management Division officially became a partner allowing the county to tie the QR code back to their Hurricane Guide webpage. Scott McConnell, Sara's husband and business partner, began working on a recipe for a unique beer that captured the essence of hurricane season. He decided to brew a California Common or "steam beer" which is a lager brewed at ale temperatures with a short ten-to-fourteen-day cycle.

All of the partners including a representative from the S.C. Emergency Management Division were invited to the brewery to help with mashing, the first step in the beer-making process. A few weeks later, the first

batches of beer were finished, and the team was invited back to help with the labeling and packaging. The county and Tradesman Brewing Company also began pushing out communication regarding hurricane safety, the Know Your Zone beer, and the upcoming Dorchester County Hurricane Prep Expo.

The Saturday event was held from 10:00AM – 1:00PM at the newly opened Ashley River Park, and first responders, local safety organizations, the S.C. Emergency Management Division, and volunteers along with our sponsors Tradesman Brewing Company and Lowes Foods attended. More than 200 people came to the event, which was a significant increase from the previous year. During the next several months, Emergency Management staff and Sara Gayle McConnel were interviewed, and their unique partnership was highlighted with local and national media.

What challenges occurred during the project? Were there any community concerns?

There were no challenges or any community concerns that occurred during the project or in response to the project. County staff were supported by administration, Dorchester County Council, and the general public throughout the project.

What were the nature and extent of the county government’s efforts to alleviate the problem(s)? How difficult was it to accomplish the project’s goals and/or objectives?

For the last several years, the Emergency Management Department worked to enhance the community’s understanding of hurricane preparedness. With the influx of new residents moving to the Charleston area, staff was concerned that the community would not be prepared for a significant weather event. This propelled them to increase the number of outreach events/presentations throughout the county, continue offering the CERT class twice a year, and create innovative messaging tactics to reach a broader audience. The Know Your Zone beer became a part of their larger hurricane awareness project. With full buy-in from all staff and partners, the project was not necessarily difficult, but staff did commit to a significant number of hours in discussions with the brewery and Holy City Distribution’s graphic design artist, at the brewery assisting in creating the initial batch, labeling and packaging the product, planning and implementing the Hurricane Expo, creating messaging to the public, and giving numerous interviews with media. However, everyone on the team truly enjoyed working on the project and was excited about its success.

Was financing the project an obstacle? Were there any unusual factors inherent in financing the project?

The County funded (\$1,000) part of the costs associated with the label design, label manufacturing and shipping, and canning supplies to Holy City Distribution. Other than that, there were no additional costs connected to this project.

Did any agencies, citizen groups, or other organizations assist your county with this project? Did their participation pose any particular challenges or offer any unique contributions or benefits?

The County partnered with Tradesman Brewing Company who created the recipe for this unique, one-of-a-kind beer and brewed the beer. They connected the county to their distributor, Holy City Distribution, who took the lead on the design of the label with input from county staff. They also distributed Know Your Zone to the following locations throughout South Carolina:

- Alchemist Beverage Company
- Bottles of Mt. Pleasant
- Lowes Foods (Mt. Pleasant, West Ashley, Summerville, Pawley’s Island, Forest Acres, and Sunset Blvd.)
- Total Wines (Mount Pleasant, West Ashley, Myrtle Beach, and Columbia)
- Charleston Wine Co.
- House of Brews
- Legend Oaks Golf Club
- Craft and Draft

The Carolina Crisp Malt was provided by Jared Weathers of Weathers Farm which is a family-owned business located in Dorchester County. The county also partnered with the S.C. Emergency Management Division who allowed the QR code to link to their newly created Hurricane Guide webpage. The webpage also invited users to download the S.C. Emergency Manager App that allows for customization of a personal emergency plan, evacuation maps, a share your location option, and traffic and weather updates.

Are there any unresolved problems or other goals left to tackle?

The County and Tradesman Brewing Company have continued to work together to educate the community regarding hurricane preparedness. Recently, Sara from Tradesman Brewing Company and

Dave from the Dorchester County Emergency Management Department co-presented at a workshop 'Thinking Outside the Guide' at this year's SCEMA Conference. They highlighted their partnership emphasizing the need for creative messaging and public outreach. Both the County and Tradesman are committed to coordinating for future projects with the goal of increasing the number of scans to hurricane preparedness information.

Project Originality/Innovation

Justify the uniqueness of this project. What makes it different from other projects designed to achieve the same objective? Do you know of any other similar programs in South Carolina? If so, how is your program different?

To our knowledge, this project is unique as no brewery has partnered with an Emergency Management Department for a one-of-a-kind beer with a QR code that directs scanners to safety information. It was this unique collaboration that prompted local and national media attention which helped to take the message of hurricane preparedness to a much broader audience. It was this coverage that drove interest from FEMA as well as representatives from the Florida Division of Emergency Management who also reached out to Tradesman Brewing Company and later replicated the project with their partnership with Proof Brewing and their Halfway Full is Halfway There beer.

We believe that the partnership with Tradesman Brewing Company and the Know Your Zone safety campaign is an innovative way to reach a new audience, and Dorchester County plans to continue to develop creative ways to build awareness for hurricane safety.

What innovations were required in accomplishing your objectives?

The most essential and important part of this project was locating a local brewery that was willing to take a chance in partnering with the Emergency Management Department. We had very little to offer to Tradesman Brewing Company in terms of funding, advertising, distributing, and designing, but they were excited by this unique opportunity to use a beer to help spread hurricane safety information.

Who provided creativity and imagination in your project?

Dave Amann, Emergency Management Specialist with Dorchester County, came up with the idea at a brainstorming and planning session with Emergency Management Director Tom McNeal and PIO Michelle Mills. Tom was telling the team about a local brewery in Maryland who created a beer in honor of a

significant event that happened in his hometown. Dave then expanded on Tom's story and broached the idea that it would be great for a local brewery to brew a beer called Know Your Zone with a QR code on the label that directed the scanner to hurricane safety information. After discussions with Sara from Tradesman Brewing Company for beer names ('Route and Roll', 'Hurricane Kit Item #3', 'Safety Plan', etc.), the team decided on the original name that Dave had initially come up with. The Know Your Zone campaign began in South Carolina and was celebrating its tenth anniversary. Since then, the slogan has become well known in other parts of the country.

Scott McConnell, co-owner of Tradesman Brewing Company, was responsible for creating the unique beer recipe. Know Your Zone is a California Common or "steam beer" which is a lager brewed at ale temperatures with a short ten-to-fourteen-day cycle. We all know that Hurricane Season is steamy so a "steam beer" seemed appropriate! As Sara Gayle McConnel said in her Accuweather interview, "People understand that it's more than just beer, that there's other community (members) involved, and that we're trying to keep people safe," she said. "It's very exciting."



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1647 KING STREET EXT., CHARLESTON, SC 29405





Beer can features QR code to help residents learn hurricane evacuation zone in SC

Tradesman Brewing Company and the Dorchester County Emergency Management collaborated to make the "Know Your Zone Lager" for hurricane season.

Brewery serves up refreshing take on hurricane preparedness

By Thomas Leffler, AccuWeather staff writer

Published Jul 12, 2022 3:53 PM EDT | Updated Jul 12, 2022 3:54 PM EDT



The cans feature a QR code that people can scan using their phones. It brings them directly to South Carolina's new hurricane preparedness website.



Dorchester County and SC Emergency Management Division representatives assisting Scott McConnell at Tradesman Brewing Company for the first batch of beer.



'Know Your Zone' with Dorchester County and the SC EMD logos with QR code and url



First batch of 'Know Your Zone' at Lowes Foods



Representatives from Tradesman Brewing Company and Lowes Foods at Hurricane Expo



Dorchester Treasurer with 'Know Your Zone' sample at Hurricane Expo

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500 N. MAIN STREET, SUITE 2
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April 17, 2023

J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award
South Carolina Association of Counties
1919 Thurmond Mall
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter is to provide my strong support for the submission of Dorchester County's Emergency Management Department's Know Your Zone safety campaign for the J. Mitchell Graham Award.

As a long-time resident of Dorchester County, I know firsthand the importance of hurricane preparedness both for those that have lived here for years and newcomers who have never experienced a hurricane before. While we were excited about the debut of the Know Your Zone beer at our annual Hurricane Preparedness Expo last year, we did not anticipate the amount of local or national media coverage of our partnership. This elevated the hurricane safety message which spread to millions of people across the country and inspired the Florida Division of Emergency Management to replicate it. As a result, we are extremely proud of the Know Your Zone beer as it was a truly unique and innovative way to increase the conversation surrounding hurricane safety and highlight the state's new hurricane resource, hurricane.sc.

While this project originated within our Emergency Management Department, we are extremely appreciative of Tradesman Brewing Company, S.C. Emergency Management Division, Holy City Distribution, and Weathers Farm in Dorchester County for supporting and contributing to this project. It was their partnership that helped to make this campaign a success!

On behalf of the Dorchester County Council, thank you for the opportunity to submit our Know Your Zone beer and hurricane safety campaign for the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award. We know that there are many well-deserving projects, and we are honored to be among them.

Sincerely,

Regards,

S. Todd Friddle, Chairman
Dorchester County Council