

Business Record

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Haberl prepares for winter at Safeguard Iowa

By Amanda Ripp, *Staff Writer*

Sept. 11 has marked a change in Jami Haberl's career direction twice. The events of 9/11 led Haberl toward the health-care-preparedness field, and she began her new position at Safeguard Iowa Partnership on Sept. 11, 2007. Haberl is networking, educating and developing plans in her new position in preparation for emergencies and the winter season.

Have you always lived in Iowa?

Yes. Well, I lived in Minnesota and I lived in Connecticut for a short time.



Photo by Duane Tinkey

How did you make your first dollar?

I worked in high school, but my first real job was at the American Cancer Society in St. Paul, Minn.

Where did you work in high school?

For my first job, I worked as a certified nurse's assistant at my local hospital.

How did you become interested in the public-health and health-care-administration field?

My sister has a medical disorder. I am the oldest of five kids and she is the youngest. So as a kid, we spent a lot of time at the University of Iowa hospital clinics, always going with my mom and my sister. I grew an interest in the health-care field from there.

What is your professional background?

After I worked at the American Cancer Society, I moved back to Des Moines to go to grad school (at Des Moines University) for public-health and health-care administration. Then I started working at the Iowa Department of Public Health where I worked initially on a telemedicine grant. That grant funding ran out and 9/11 happened, so my supervisor ... asked if I would help write the (state's public-health and health-care-preparedness grant). I worked on that for about five years, and built the public-health and health-care-preparedness program here in Iowa. From there I went to the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care and worked on the physicians' quality reporting initiative, which is a contract we have with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services out of Washington, D.C. ... and then I started here for Safeguard Iowa. I left the preparedness field for about a year there and then I came back to preparedness.

What are your main responsibilities?

Really it is coordinating and overseeing and administering the whole partnership. It's a one-man shop and I am it. So all of the partners that I work with have full-time jobs; they are volunteering their time to keep the partnership moving; but it is really my role to actually implement and get things rolling in assisting some of the team needs, to make sure initiatives are met.

Have you had to coordinate any specific efforts since you started?

No, we have not had any incidents since I have started, knock on wood.

Have you had to gear up for winter?

We talk about potential incidents. Looking back from the past years, Iowa has been hit with a number of floods, as well as the ice storm in 2007. We will look at if we need to be engaged in any of those types of activities. And then some exercises with the state government partners to make sure that our plans make sense and we have written plans that are actually going to work.

Can you explain a normal day when you are preparing for a disaster?

A lot of what we do is bring the partners together, making sure that the public sector understands from the governmental perspective how they are going to respond, so that they understand the processes that are in place. A lot of it is education and networking, so that they are building trust. ... Building relationships, that is the key element to dealing with disasters at any level.

On the weekends, where would people find you?

Iowa State (University) football games. With my friends and family, I try to get with them as much as possible. I try to do a lot of career development stuff. I talk to students about what type of careers are available in the major. I had no idea I would be doing this with the degree.