



10 East Poplar Street • Suite B1 • Harrisburg, IL 62946  
(618) 252-3732 • FAX (618) 252-1686

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

**News Media Contact:**

Allan C. Ninness  
Director  
(618) 252-3732

[ema@salinecounty.illinois.gov](mailto:ema@salinecounty.illinois.gov)

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### **SCEMA Director Gives Presentation at Rural Health Institute**

*“The participants were very interested...”*

SCEMA Director Allan Ninness was invited to Ninth Annual Rural Health Institute conference at Effingham, Illinois that was held from March 5-7. He gave two presentations to the gathered audience on two different days.

The presentation dealt with the concepts of spontaneous volunteer handling learned from the Leap Day Tornado. The attendees were given a unique, hour-long presentation for those two days. To keep it interesting and maintain an audience’s attention for two days, one of those presentations was given a more in-depth approach. The listeners were treated to photos, information and facts, and even a voicemail recording from one of the survivors during the tornado.

Director Ninness spoke candidly about the lack of preparedness to handle the sudden influx of volunteers that quickly followed. He thanked the Operation Blessing organization and promised to take the lessons he learned firsthand to ensure his county would be able to adequately handle similar situations in the future.

“The participants were very interested in the response and recovery and asked many questions related to public health’s role and the long term recovery aspect of the tornado.” Said Dir. Allan Ninness, “I enjoyed the opportunity to share the lessons learned and overall experience of the tornado with attendees from other rural communities that may be affected similarly in the future.”