

13 Things To Remember From PrepperCon 2016

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During the 70's and 80's the survival market could hardly support a magazine or two dedicated to the topic. Today, it seems like a new survival-related TV show is released every month.

And we have more than a dozen magazines, hundreds of blogs, websites, groups, and stores, some organizations with memberships numbering in the hundreds of thousands and now this emerging market has matured to the point that it has some great regional expositions.

This is great news if you are interested in survivalism or emergency preparedness, and attending expositions like PrepperCon has a lot to offer.

[PrepperCon 2016](#), which was held in Utah, in mid-April, was larger than [2015 show](#), with more vendor booths, vendors that are household names, and more polished attractions. Here are a few of them.

1. Hurricane Simulator

After I arrived and held my first Q&A to answer reader and attendee questions about EMP, a couple people asked me if I had seen the Hurricane Simulator. Honestly, that was definitely not the first thing on my list because when I think of simulators at emergency preparedness expo's I am used to seeing things more along the lines of high end dioramas for kids. I was very wrong.

As I approached, I saw a line near one of the emergency exits of the exhibit hall where some people were strapping on climbing-grade safety harnesses and putting on goggles and hearing protection. Once outside, some twisted minds took a shipping container and hooked up a 500hp air boat fan that was just slightly smaller than the inside of the shipping container and capable of pounding out 140mph winds.

Inside the simulator, victims' safety harnesses were strapped to positions along a padded safety bar in front of the massive fan. A wind velocity sensor sent readings to a screen that told attendees how many miles per hour of wind was howling through the shipping container so they could attempt to reach the wind velocity matching the hurricane category they desired to experience.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUR7fVnKMdA&feature=youtu.be>

Video first seen on [Survivopedia](#).

Even with the safety equipment, many tapped out. I will spare you any wind-related puns and just say, it was amazing ... an incredible and effective demonstration of the fury of hurricane-force winds.

I experienced a micro burst last fall on a beach of Lake Powell. It was probably only around 65-75mph but it was more than enough to put plenty of tents in the lake and flash floods from the storm resulted in the deaths of several hikers in a nearby slot canyon. PrepperCon's hurricane simulator reminded me of the experience and is a great lesson for anyone who does not yet understand how damaging high winds can be.

2. Kyle Bell & His Son

Ben from the reality TV series Mountain Men struck me as respectful, humble, down to earth people and I think it is especially good for children to be able to meet people that they see on TV.

3. Ms America 2016 Julie Harmon

She gave a moving speech about the importance of family and emergency preparedness. Her sincerity toward the importance of the cause was evident and it is good for people to meet survivalists who defy the "doomsday prepper" stereotype in every way.

4. MilSim City

This shoot house gave attendees the opportunity to defend against a home evasion using paint rounds and realistic training arms.



If you have not trained at this level before, I strongly recommend it. If you have, repetition in skill training is important.

5. Wild Edibles Presentation

World class primitive skills guru David Holladay fed competitors wild edibles and taboo menu choices to get them to tap out as he educated expo goers about edibles foods native to the area.



After the class, students tried an array of foraged foods from Southern and Central Utah.

6. Midlife Survival Challenge

Four survivalists competed to win a pack full of survival gear. In the challenge, they ate raccoon, chose between poisonous and edible plants and started a fire with a hand drill.

The odds of taking home prizes in the competitions were very good because far more people choose to watch than to compete, so there are definitely some opportunities if you don't mind competing in front of a crowd.

7. Vehicles, Trailers & Watercraft

I was surprised by the number and diversity of big ticket rolling stock offerings at the PrepperCon 2016. It is easy for businesses with a high average dollar sale to recoup their investment in a booth so it is obvious why you see them at survival expos.





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What was surprising, and pleasantly so, was how many companies are offering survival-specific products. Hopefully we will start seeing more grey modular survival-specific vehicles and trailers

soon.

8. Taster's Choice Table

Have you ever wished you could taste food storage products before buying them in bulk? Being able to try long term storage foods before you buy them is very beneficial to us consumers so this was a good idea.

9. Faraday Cage by GTEK

This product Tim Ralston was demonstrating caught my attention because GTEK got features right that most companies do not. If you look at the photo of the product, you can see that there is no non-conductive rubber gasket, paint or coatings where the lid mates to the box. In an ammo can, these impede the flow of electrons through the skin of the Faraday cage, reducing effectiveness.



Also notice that mating surfaces are wide and precisely machined and that lid clamps in place for a tight seal. The box can also easily be locked and fixed inside a vehicle and many law enforcement agencies and departments are doing just that.

10. Knife Fighting Competition

Competitors paid \$15 to Urban Survivors to stab and slash their way through opponents with paint knives. The winner took home an engraved sword.

Carrying a knife does not make you a knife fighter. Competitions like this induce stress on the

participants, which is helpful because it simulates some of the physiological reactions we experience when we are in danger.



They also get people thinking about that little piece of metal they carry every day. If that leads to seeking out competent instruction that involves cutting on analogs like pig carcasses, then it is making people safer.

11. Children's Tsunami Tank

As you can see in the image, the tank was an effective interactive display where children could visualize the impact of a tsunami on a city by generating waves.



12. National Guard Rock Wall

PrepperCon 2016 was full of opportunities to practice skills or learn new ones and the towering rock wall that the National Guard set up was a good example of that.

13. Survival Cooking Cook-Off

This was a novel idea. Many people have food storage, but have few or no recipes that use only long term food storage.

Events like this, take participants through the process of using food storage or other preparations and that is very helpful in discovering things were left out.



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