

NEWS RELEASE: March 9, 2009

Statewide storm siren drill and Severe Weather Awareness Week

The Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management will participate in a statewide storm siren drill **Tuesday, March 10, 1:30 p.m., weather permitting**. During the drill, Emergency Management officials will activate storm sirens in Springfield and urbanized areas of Greene County.

In the event that Missouri is experiencing statewide severe weather conditions Tuesday, the statewide drill will be rescheduled for Thursday, March 12, at 1:30 p.m. This week's drill takes the place of the regularly scheduled siren test on the second Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m.

The statewide drill is coordinated by the State Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service, in observance of **Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 9-13**. Emergency management officials encourage residents to familiarize themselves with the dangers of severe thunderstorms, tornados, lightning, and floods.

"Severe weather can strike at any time," said Ryan Nicholls, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management. "The most likely occurrence is in spring and fall, but as we have seen recently, we need to be prepared 12 months out of the year."

Area residents, businesses, and schools are urged to treat Tuesday's storm siren drill as if it were an actual emergency, and practice moving to designated tornado shelters in lower levels of buildings, away from windows and glass doors.

Nicholls also encourages residents to purchase and check the batteries in weather alert radios, which notify owners when storm warnings are issued in their area. The radios are available for about \$30 through the Greater Ozarks Chapter of the American Red Cross, at 417-832-9500.

For more comprehensive disaster preparedness, Nicholls recommends enrollment in two training programs offered through the Office of Emergency Management: Hometown Ready, a certification program designed for businesses, schools, churches and other organizations, and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), a disaster prevention and response skills program for individuals.

"By focusing on education, planning, notification and response strategies, we hope to increase our community's resilience against disasters," said Nicholls.

For more information about Hometown Ready or CERT, call the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management at 417-869-6040, or visit www.greenecountymo.org/web/OEM/.

For media inquiries about the statewide storm siren drill, call Ryan Nicholls, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management, at 417-869-6040, or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 471-379-5713.

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