

NEWS RELEASE: March 4, 2011

Statewide storm siren drill Tuesday

The Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management will participate in a statewide storm siren drill **Tuesday, March 8, 1:30 p.m., weather permitting**. During the drill, Emergency Management officials will activate storm sirens in Springfield and urbanized areas of Greene County.

The statewide drill is coordinated by the State Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service, in observance of Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 7-11.

Ryan Nicholls, Director of the Office of Emergency Management, urges area residents, businesses, and schools 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.

"As we recently witnessed the state-wide tornado outbreak on New Year's Eve, we can now expect severe storms any time of year, and it's important to know how to protect yourselves, your families and your co-workers," said Nicholls. "We hope the entire community participates in the drill and that Tuesday night, everyone can share their drill experience with their family members at the dinner table."

In 2010, 65 tornadoes were recorded in Missouri, well above the annual average of 32.

In the event of severe weather conditions Tuesday, the drill will be rescheduled for Thursday, March 10. This week's drill takes the place of the regularly scheduled siren test on the second Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m.

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.

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/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 417-224-5510.

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