



SPRINGFIELD- GREENE COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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PREPARE | RESPOND | RECOVER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Today Marks the 10 Year Anniversary of Historic 2007 Ice Storm

SPRINGFIELD, Missouri- Greene County, Missouri experienced its worst natural disaster in 50 years during the weekend of January 12-14, 2007 as a severe ice storm crippled the region's power infrastructure and brutally cold temperatures threatened the health and welfare of citizens and livestock. Over three days, approximately two inches of ice fell, causing massive damage to electric transmission lines and poles that left tens of thousands without power for as long as two weeks. Additionally, tree limbs and vegetation crippled by the weight of the ice caused extensive damage to structures and blocked roadways throughout the county.

"I will never forget the sound of cracking and falling branches," said Larry Woods, interim director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management. "It was almost deafening. I have never experienced a disaster like that before. The entire county – every outdoor surface – was blanketed by a thick sheet of ice. It was a dangerous and yet breathtaking scene."

Around-the-clock response and recovery efforts were conducted by local agencies, both at Greene County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and by utilities and public works crews in the field. Emergency management personnel recorded 650 man-hours at the EOC during the first 10 days of the storm alone. In the storm's aftermath, City Utilities reported 75,000 customers without power in Springfield, while regional electric cooperatives faced another 10,000-15,000 outages in the county.

The City of Springfield and the Greene County Commission jointly issued a disaster declaration on Jan. 13, as shelters began to open throughout the city to house residents displaced from their homes due to the power outages. On Jan. 14 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identified Greene County as one of 32 Missouri counties in a state of disaster. President George W. Bush granted Senator Roy Blunt's request for a major disaster declaration on Jan. 16, opening the door for recovery cost-sharing, resources and disaster financial assistance to those impacted by the storm.

Over the course of two weeks, over 8,000 calls from citizens were received by the OEM call center. These calls included requests for information as well as requests for services. The Springfield-Greene County 911 Emergency Communications Center logged 22,877 calls in the first 10 days of the event.

Of the \$107 million in damage to public infrastructure across the state, \$40 million of that occurred in Greene County. According to the Missouri Department of Insurance, 15,164 Greene County residents filed for \$41 million in claims for losses to their homes and another \$687,000 for auto claims.

"The 2007 ice storm should serve to remind us all of the great importance of being prepared," said Woods. "It is so easy to become complacent and not place a priority on preparing for the next disaster. People were in their homes for days and in some cases, weeks without power after the '07 storm. Lines for gas were long, resources were in high demand, and if you were prepared, you were much better off."

Preparedness doesn't have to be difficult or complex, and it can save your life. As we experience winter weather here in the Ozarks, keep these simple tips in mind, and use advance warnings from local weather authorities as opportunities to enhance your family's preparedness efforts.

- Stock up on non-perishable food items, drinking water and necessary medical supplies, and make sure these items are included in your emergency kit.
- Keep snow shovels, rock salt and sand or kitty litter for traction on hand.
- Fill up your vehicle's gas tank.
- Carry a winter emergency kit in your vehicle, including an ice scraper, blankets, winter clothing, flashlight with extra batteries, drinking water, energy snacks, jumper cables and sand or kitty litter for traction.
- Keep a supply of firewood or fuel on hand for use in fireplaces, heaters and generators.

"The citizens of Greene County have shown their resiliency in the face of disaster, as evidenced by the impressive recovery from the ice storm of 2007. I'm proud to live and work in a community that recognizes the long-term benefits of disaster preparedness." said Woods.

For more winter weather safety tips, visit <http://www.greenecountyoeem.org/wp/preparedness/winter-weather/>.

Read more from the [2007 Ice Storm After Action Report](#).

[2007 Ice Storm Photos](#)

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