

NEWS RELEASE: March 5, 2010

Statewide storm siren drill Tuesday

The Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management will participate in a statewide storm siren drill **Tuesday, March 9, 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 11. 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 8-12**. Emergency management officials encourage residents to familiarize themselves with the dangers of severe thunderstorms, tornados, lightning, and floods.

“Since 2003, we have had several notable tornado outbreaks throughout the region and in Greene County, the most recent occurring just last May,” said Ryan Nicholls, Director of Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management. “We are prone to severe weather that can strike at any time and we need to be prepared.”

In 2009, 45 tornadoes were recorded in Missouri, causing three fatalities. This is above the annual average of 31 tornadoes in Missouri.

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.

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.

Greene County CERT will participate in Severe Weather Awareness Day Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Battlefield Mall in Springfield, distributing information and other materials related to disaster preparedness.

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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