

NEWS RELEASE: May 31, 2011

Greene County CERT completes search and rescue training tonight

About 20 volunteer Greene County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainees will complete their disaster response training with a search and rescue exercise tonight, May 31, 7 p.m., at the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management, 833 Boonville Ave., Springfield.

The exercise culminates a seven-session training course for CERT, which trains regular people in basic disaster prevention and response skills, like fire safety, search and rescue, team organization, terrorism awareness and disaster medical operations.

Ryan Nicholls, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management, said volunteers who had previously completed CERT training have been invaluable to the Joplin tornado recovery effort.

“Organized, trained volunteer groups are very important in any disaster response,” said Nicholls. “When a catastrophic event like the Joplin tornado takes place, resources are typically limited, and CERT helps fill a void.”

Two dozen trained CERT volunteers partnered with K-9 search and rescue teams in Joplin last week, helping sweep the tornado disaster zone for survivors and remains. Some of these volunteers will assist in tonight’s training exercise.

Tonight’s search and rescue exercise will be held outdoors on property adjacent to the Office of Emergency Management. Trainees will apply information learned in class to form an incident command team, conduct search and rescue activities, and treat and triage volunteer “victims.” Another 17 CERT trainees completed their training with a similar exercise Saturday.

The next CERT class will be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings, July 5-26. CERT training is free, but pre-registration is required. For enrollment information, call the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management at 417-869-6040.

The media is welcome to view tonight’s exercise. For media inquiries, call Warren Robinson, Greene County CERT Director, at 417-869-6040 or 417-861-2478; or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.