

July 24, 2012

News Release

For Immediate Release

Heat Illness Total Continues to Rise

With a National Weather Service heat advisory in effect through 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 25, the totals for heat-related illness in Greene County and Missouri continue to rise.

In Greene County, **there have been at least 132 cases of heat-related illnesses in local emergency rooms** from June 1 through last Friday, July 20. Of those, 33 were admitted to hospitals. Statewide, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has confirmed reports of 866 heat-related emergency department visits from May 1, 2012 through July 23, 2012, including 25 deaths related to the heat. No deaths related to heat have been confirmed in Greene County. Of the 133 cases recorded locally, 92 people were Greene County residents and the total age range spans from 5 to 96 years old.

Wednesday will be the fourteenth day this summer that Greene County has been under a NWS heat advisory.

This weekend the ongoing heat wave will coincide with a popular Ozarks tradition – the 76th annual Ozark Empire Fair. Fairgoers should keep heat precautions in mind while enjoying the festivities by following some of these tips:

- Take advantage of the air-conditioned E-Plex. Take frequent breaks from the fair concourse to go inside and cool off.
- Hydrate. Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty; avoid drinks that contain caffeine.
- Take it easy. The fairgrounds offer a lot to see and do. Take your time and rest every so often, even if you do not necessarily feel tired. Sitting in the shade is good, but taking a rest in an air-conditioned building is better. A limited number of motorized scooters are available, as are a limited number of strollers and wagons for young children.
- Consider attending in the evening rather than during the middle of the day when temperatures are highest. The fair is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily, but may remain open later dependent upon crowds. The midway opens at 1 p.m. daily.
- Don't overdo the fried food. Eating smaller, more frequent meals will help you better cope with the heat.
- Wear light-colored, light-weight, loose-fitting clothing along with a hat or visor and sunglasses. And don't forget to use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 or higher.
- Tell someone if you're not feeling well. Contact fair staff or on-site emergency medical personnel if you experience symptoms commonly associated with heat-related illness such as: heavy sweating, paleness, tiredness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness or fainting, headache, nausea or vomiting.

Elsewhere in Springfield, the following locations continue to serve as designated public cooling centers during each building's normal business hours during the heat advisory through Wednesday:

- American Red Cross, 1545 N. West Bypass
- Ozarks Technical Community College (Commons), 933 E. Central St.
- Salvation Army, 1707 W. Chestnut Expressway
- YMCA, 1901 E. Republic Road
- YMCA, 417 S. Jefferson Ave.
- Chesterfield Family Center lobby, 2511 W. Republic Road
- Doling Family Center lobby, 310 E. Talmage St.
- Mediacom Ice Park upper and lower lobbies, 635 E. Trafficway

Cooling centers are open to the public and meant to provide relief for those who otherwise do not have access to an air-conditioned environment. Other public services affected by the high heat include:

- The Park Board has extended hours at Silver Springs Pool today, and Grant Beach and Westport pools on Wednesday. Complete information: <http://bit.ly/P5mAlj>
- City Utilities is offering free bus rides to accommodate those who may need transportation around Springfield to the centers located along city bus routes.
- Springfield Animal Control continues to suspend the trapping of animals.