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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **City and County Announce Preparedness Initiative**

The nearly 70 community members who attended FEMA's Integrated Emergency Management course July 20, returned home on a mission.

While the instructors praised Springfield and Greene County for being among the top three, best-prepared communities in the country, local leaders returning from the disaster training want the momentum to continue.

"An important takeaway from this week is that emergency management, recovery, and response is not just a job for our public safety officials," said Rob Dixon, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce. "Whole community emergency management literally involves all of us - we all live and work here. And it's going to be up to all of us to get back on our feet after a disaster."

City Manager Greg Burris requested that the "campers" who participated at the self-named "Disaster Camp" share their experiences with the rest of the community and launch an education campaign aimed at empowering individuals and organizations to be prepared.

The campaign will start on the heels of the grand opening of the Greene County Public Safety Center Aug. 6, in conjunction with National Emergency Preparedness Month in September. It will build on the information shared in a blog about the training experience that included photos and video of portions of the training. The blog can be found at <http://disastercamp.tumblr.com>.

FEMA instructors representing a variety of disciplines, from law enforcement to public works, gave feedback to the group and encouraged them to continue to improve plans and preparation.

"I think Springfield is one of the most, if not the most, prepared communities I have ever worked with in a capacity such as this, in a training capacity," said Meghan Van Aken, FEMA Training Specialist. VanAken oversaw the entire training course. "They really blew us away . . . they blew the staff here away. They were spot on with everything they did. They did just a really great job."

Bruce Marshall, a 31-year veteran of FEMA, who has responded to 70 federally-declared disaster and about 200 integrated disaster training programs, said "I never saw so many wheels moving at one time as you had in your EOC, but you all were dead-solid perfect . . . every single one of you. The best compliment I can give you is that I'd move to Springfield in a minute."

**Photos, B-roll and video interviews with participant "campers" and instructors are available for download.**

## FEMA Instructors

**Bruce Marshall**, FEMA Emergency Management Institute faculty, 31-year veteran of FEMA, who has responded to 70 federally-declared disaster and about 200 integrated disaster training programs. Bruce provides feedback on how Springfield-Greene County performed during the disaster drill.

**Meghan VanAken**, FEMA Training Specialist at the Emergency Management Institute Meghan provided oversight for the entire training and exercises and shares her response to working with and training Springfield-Greene County.

**Brad Huffines**, FEMA Emergency Management Institute Faculty and Principal of Huffines Consulting. Brad served as public information overseer and handled both the weather simulation and played the role of media / public inquiries during the disaster. He addresses the importance of a strong communication effort during a disaster and rates Springfield-Greene County on public information efforts.

**John Kane**, FEMA Emergency Management law enforcement faculty and former Lt. with Sacramento, CA Police Department.

**Jim Reseburg**, FEMA Emergency Management Institute faculty Jim shares his insights on emergency preparedness and rates Springfield-Greene County on preparedness level.

## Springfield-Greene County Participants

**Ryan Nicholls**, Springfield-Greene County Director of Emergency Management, gives background information on the training program and drill and explains what the participants can expect from the five-day event. He explains in what ways Springfield-Greene County is well prepared for a disaster and in what ways he thinks improvement is needed.

**Springfield Mayor Bob Stephens**, explains why it's important for elected officials to participate in trainings and what he hoped to gain from the experience. He also explains why the trip to Maryland was necessary, versus having the training at home.

**Rob Dixon**, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, explains why the Chamber of Commerce is involved in the drill and training.

**Debbi Meeds**, American Red Cross, discusses what it means to have an integrated emergency response and how Springfield-Greene County organizations work together in times of crisis. She also discusses what ARC hopes to learn from the event.

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