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News Release

For Immediate Release

Make September SAFEtember by Preparing for Emergencies



As the remnants of Hurricane Isaac moved into Springfield and Greene County, September began National Preparedness Month with a stark reminder of why it is important for everyone to be ready for disaster.

Since 1990, Greene County has had 12 federally declared disasters, tying for second place in Missouri. In June 2010, Missouri was ranked number 10 in the nation for total number of disasters. This region is certainly no stranger to danger.

The Springfield-Greene County office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinates local and regional response efforts in the event of disasters. Director Ryan Nicholls says the biggest threats locally are ice storms, tornadoes and fires.

Nicholls said an important part of any community's ability to respond and recover from disaster actually happens before disaster strikes. That's why OEM is teaming up with partners, such as the American Red Cross, the City of Springfield and City Utilities, to launch a public awareness campaign to help citizens prepare for what they can and should do during a natural disaster.

The campaign will address the four themes professionals think are most important advice to citizens to help get them prepared:

1. Make a Plan
2. Build a Kit
3. Stay Informed
4. Get Involved

In a recent local survey, OEM found that 66% of nearly 500 surveyed, do not have a disaster supply kit on hand. About 68% have not practiced any type of emergency drill and about 74% don't have a plan for a place to reunite if displaced by a fire.

"It is our goal to improve preparedness at all levels in our community," Nicholls said.

"Recently, a group of city and community leaders participated in a week-long training exercise at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Md. It was an invaluable experience and reminded all of us just how important it is to be prepared and how to react when disaster strikes," he said. Springfield-Greene County was praised by FEMA instructors as being one of the most and best-prepared communities to respond to for a local disaster.

"One conclusion that we all came away with was that we can't just stop here," explained City Manager Greg Burris. "Every citizen should be prepared."

Throughout the month, OzarksReady.com will provide education on the four themes and offer opportunities to purchase emergency kits, weather radios and other necessities.

For media information, contact: Dale Moore, Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management, at 417-869-6040 or Cora Scott, City of Springfield Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement at 417-864-1009.