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News Release

For Immediate Release

City Manager to convene experts to address higher food bank demands after SNAP cuts

City Manager Greg Burris doesn't want to wait for more potential federal cuts to happen before starting a local discussion on how Springfield and Greene County will continue to support "our most vulnerable citizens."

During a meeting he is calling a Food Summit, 10 a.m. Wednesday at the Council of Churches of the Ozarks, 627 N. Glenstone, area food pantries will report on whether their current level of food support is sustainable into the future.

Congress recently reduced funding Nov. 1 to the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program, (SNAP - formerly known as Food Stamps). A family of four has their benefits cut by \$36 per month. Over the course of the year, that family will have \$432 less to spend on food.

Additional cuts could also be forthcoming as Congress debates the Farm Bill that includes SNAP.

Many southwest Missouri residents often have very little money left for nutritious food after paying their rent, utilities, transportation, childcare and more. About 16 percent of the people in Greene County (44,800 individuals) receive SNAP benefits, according to an extrapolation from a Feeding America Analysis of the ARRA SNAP cuts effective Nov. 1. Feeding America is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity.

"The four groups this may impact the most are: children, senior citizens, people with disabilities and Veterans," Burris says.

Wednesday's meeting continues a dialogue City Manager Burris started with various homeless services providers a few years ago. He has met with them a few times a year in response to issues uncovered during the community strategic planning process that resulted in "minimizing poverty" becoming a major theme. The providers he met with identified food banks and pantries as an area in which leaders might want to focus.

The agenda includes a discussion of potential community impact of various funding scenarios and a brainstorming session to identify local solutions.

For more information, contact City Manager Greg Burris at 417-864-1006 or gburris@springfieldmo.gov or Director of Public Information & Civic Engagement Cora Scott at 417-380-3352 or cscott@springfieldmo.gov.