

NEWS RELEASE: April 27, 2011

## **Two Earthquake Awareness events planned for Thursday's ShakeOut**

The Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management will take part in an elementary school earthquake drill and host a New Madrid earthquake symposium in observance of the Great Central US ShakeOut Thursday, April 28.

Ryan Nicholls, Director of Emergency Management, will spend Thursday morning with Mrs. Christensen's 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Willard South Elementary, 4151 W. Division, Springfield. Nicholls and the class will discuss earthquake safety at 9:45 a.m. before taking part in an 11-state earthquake drill at 10:15. Willard South is one of more than 350 Missouri schools taking part in the "Drop, Cover and Hold On" drill Thursday morning. Members of the media are encouraged to attend.

"Earthquakes come with no warning, so it's critical to be able to react immediately," said Nicholls. "Fortunately, the key steps are easy to remember: Drop, Cover and Hold. You need to drop to the ground, cover yourself with a sturdy table or desk and hold on."

Thursday evening, emergency management staff will take part in a symposium called "Earthquake Awareness: New Madrid and Greene County." Speakers include Missouri Department of Natural Resources Geologist David A. Gaunt, KTTS News Director Don Louzader, and John Elmore, Office of Emergency Management Planning Specialist. The symposium will be held 6-9 p.m. Thursday at the Office of Emergency Management, 833 Boonville Ave., Springfield. It is sponsored by Greene County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and is free and open to the public.

Both events are held in conjunction with the Great Central US ShakeOut, the first ever multi-state earthquake drill, held Thursday, April 28, at 10:15 a.m. Thursday's drill will include an estimated 2.9 million residents of Missouri and 10 other states in the New Madrid seismic zone, the country's most active earthquake zone east of the Rocky Mountains, centered in southeast Missouri.

The drill is part of the bicentennial commemoration of the great New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-12. The largest of the quakes was Feb. 7, 1812 in New Madrid, Mo. The earthquakes rang church bells on the East Coast, altered the flow of the Mississippi River, turned rich farmland into fields of sand and destroyed countless structures. They were followed by aftershocks which continued for more than two years.

For more information about the Great Central US ShakeOut, visit <http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/>. For more information about the Willard South Elementary drill or the symposium, call the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management at 471-869-6040; or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.

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