



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Government and Community Leaders Gear Up for Disaster Camp

SPRINGFIELD, Missouri- A team of almost 70 representatives from Greene County, the city of Springfield, area municipalities and local community organizations will depart this Sunday, Feb. 12 to attend a week long disaster preparedness training course at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC), located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The NETC is home to the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), a FEMA training institution that provides courses on emergency management core competencies to local public and private sector officials from across the United States. Travel expenses, lodging and all course materials for the trip are funded through FEMA.

"To have almost 70 local leaders recognize the need for disaster response training and devote a week of their time to do so speaks volumes about how dedicated our community is to preparing for the next disaster," said Larry Woods, interim director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). "This training will serve to enhance our community's disaster resilience and ultimately help us recover much more quickly in the event of a disaster."

This community specific integrated emergency management course will include a comprehensive full-scale exercise that will test the city and county's disaster response plans utilizing a "whole community" approach. OEM personnel and FEMA training specialists have worked together over the last year to develop the exercise, which will focus on local hazards and related response efforts.

This marks the second time that local leaders traveled to the NETC to participate in this course. A group of nearly 70 members attended EMI in 2012 and impressed FEMA instructors with their grasp of Emergency Operations Center management and their collaborative approach to disaster response. "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," said Meghan Van Aken, FEMA training specialist, of the 2012 attendees.

Local communities must submit an application to EMI for a chance to participate in the course. Springfield-Greene County was selected from among a pool of applicants as one of the 2017 participating jurisdictions.

"The best way to ensure the readiness of our plans is to exercise them, and that's just what we will do during this week long course. You don't see this type of cooperation among local agencies and organizations often. Our collaborative approach sets us apart and makes our community an example of the best way to respond to disaster," said Woods.

The group from Springfield and Greene County will return on Friday, Feb. 17.

Follow OEM, the City of Springfield and Greene County on social media for updates throughout the week.

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