

For Immediate Release

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A Draft Is On the Horizon *Task Force Gaining Ground In Finalizing Plan*

Springfield, IL April 7, 2008 — The Sangamon County Multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Task Force is coming to a close and will gather to tie up some loose ends on Wednesday. The fifth meeting of the task force will be held April 9, 2008 at 5:30pm in the Jerome Municipal Center located at 2901 Leonard Street in Jerome, IL. This meeting will be held at the same location as the February meeting. The public is strongly encouraged and welcome to attend so please call the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission office at 535-3110 for questions or directions.

Representatives from Auburn, Buffalo, Cantrall, Chatham, Curran, Dawson, Divernon, Illiopolis, Jerome, New Berlin, Pawnee, Pleasant Plains, Riverton, Rochester, Sherman, Southern View, Springfield, Thayer, Williamsville and Sangamon County will attend the fifth meeting of the Sangamon County Multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Task Force. The governing bodies of participating communities have determined the mitigation projects they wish to undertake. Next on their agenda is to finalize a method to prioritize these projects. A procedure to maintain the plan, including annual reviews, 5-year updates, and continued public participation, will be established. The next step is to prepare a draft plan, available for public review, by mid-May.

Mitigations activities generated at the February meeting include projects such as 1) provide weather radios, 2) implement safe rooms on mains roads at rest stops, 3) bury power lines leading to critical facilities, 4) implement a tree trimming program for around overhead lines, and 5) adopt building codes to ensure safe buildings. Each community is required to have at least one mitigation activity in their plan, but is strongly encouraged to have more. Some mitigation projects included in the plan may be eligible for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which provides grants for long-term hazard mitigation projects following a major disaster declaration. Mitigation actions will be based on nine hazards that include: dam failure, drought, earthquakes, extreme heat, floods, mine subsidence, severe storms, tornados and winter storms. For more information on each hazard, its risk assessment and activities generated from the February meeting please log on to <http://co.sangamon.il.us/NHMP>.

The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission was awarded a contract for a Hazard Mitigation Planning grant in the amount of \$46,167 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This grant will fund 75% of the cost of plan preparation. The Regional Planning Commission will facilitate development of the plan and Sangamon County will provide the remaining 25% through staff involvement.

"The development and maintenance of a Hazard Mitigation Plan is important to the welfare of all of us in Sangamon County," said Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Norm Sims. "Any one of us could be affected by a future natural disaster, and it is so important for the citizens of Sangamon County to get involved in this effort any way they can."

The advantages of having a hazard mitigation plan include protecting citizens and property from the effects of hazards such as tornadoes, flooding and winter storms. Any community that has a hazard

mitigation plan that is compliant with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 is eligible for hazard mitigation grant money from FEMA. The purpose of this plan is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters by identifying mitigation measures that can be implemented prior to a disaster.

For more information call Linda Wheeland at *(217) 535-3110* or email HazardPlan@co.sangamon.il.us

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