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NEWS

SEDGWICK COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – Sedgwick County Emergency Management is gearing up to help residents prepare for severe weather season.

Severe Weather Safety Classes

In February, March and April, 23 severe weather safety classes will be offered at locations throughout Sedgwick County, including two Wichita presentations: Thursday, March 6 at Northwest High School and Saturday, April 12 at Exploration Place.

The sessions are multi-media presentations that include videos designed to teach attendees the basics of thunderstorm development, storm structures and features, how to recognize them, and how to stay safe from them. What, when and how to report severe weather information will also be covered. Classes are open to the public and no prior experience or knowledge of severe weather is necessary to attend. Registration for the two-hour class is not necessary, and a complete list of classes is available at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

Multi-tiered Warning System

In Sedgwick County, residents enjoy a multi-tiered warning system that includes media alerts, NOAA radio alerts, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and outdoor warning devices.

Tuning into local media outlets is always a good first step to learning about potential warnings, and the Sedgwick County Emergency Information Log also offers a direct source of information regarding any type of emergency affecting the area, including severe weather. The log is updated in real time by emergency management personnel. It is helpful especially in times of uncertainty, such as false alarms and rumor control.

The log may be accessed by visiting the Emergency Management website at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

Note: it is not recommended to call 911 to inquire about a severe weather event. Residents should only contact 911 if they are in need of assistance from firefighters, police or the emergency medical service (EMS).

Updated Outdoor Warning System

In 2013, upgrades were completed to the outdoor warning system in Sedgwick County. This storm season, the new system will operate digitally with expanded security features and in a “selective warning” manner. In the past, the system operated in an “all or nothing” manner, meaning every outdoor warning device would activate if any portion of Sedgwick County was experiencing a tornado threat. The new system will allow operators to sound only the devices in the direct or adjacent threat path.

Prepare, Plan, Be Informed

As with any emergency, preparedness can make the difference. As severe weather season approaches, remember to:

- Get a Kit – Gather necessary items and information for your family's emergency preparedness kit.
- Make a Plan – A thorough and practiced plan can help you keep track of family members in any emergency.
- Be Informed – Stay tuned to sources of information before, during and after an emergency.
- Get Involved – We all have a role to play in keeping our hometowns safe. Contact local volunteer organizations to find out how you can contribute.

More information about each of these preparedness steps may be found at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

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