



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: (866) 920-MEMA

Media Contact
866-920-MEMA

Jan. 14, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EARTHQUAKE AWARENESS WEEK

PEARL – This year marks the bicentennial of a devastating series of earthquakes along the New Madrid seismic zone, which impacts northwest Mississippi. Governor Haley Barbour has declared Jan. 17-21 as Mississippi’s Earthquake Awareness Week.

“The threat of a major earthquake along the New Madrid fault poses a high risk for severe damage in our state,” Governor Barbour said. “Our residents need to realize a big quake is a real possibility.”

The New Madrid seismic zone stretches 40 miles wide and 200 miles long and affects parts of Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. The zone consists of a series of complex faults that cross the Mississippi River in three places and the Ohio River in two places.

The New Madrid is most famous for a series of earthquakes between 1811 and 1812 that caused more than 2,000 aftershocks in five months and five earthquakes with an estimated magnitude of 8.0 or stronger.

“Unlike severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and hurricanes, we will get very little warning that a significant earthquake is happening until the ground starts shaking,” said MEMA Director Mike Womack. “It is extremely important that folks know how to prepare ahead of time.”

The strongest recorded earthquake in Mississippi happened in 1931 with a magnitude of 4.6 centered on Tallahatchie County. The earthquake damaged buildings and toppled chimneys. Smaller quakes are felt and registered in Mississippi every year.

MEMA will provide information and preparedness tips throughout Earthquake Awareness Week. For more information, contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at www.msema.org. For detailed information about the New Madrid Earthquake Zone please visit the Central United States Earthquake Consortium at www.cusec.org.

###

“Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property”
Visit us online at www.msema.org