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IEMA Encourages Illinois Residents to Register for 'The Great ShakeOut' Earthquake Drill in October

California Earthquake Highlights Importance of Preparedness

SPRINGFIELD – People in northern California were jolted awake Sunday morning by a 6.0 earthquake that damaged buildings and injured at least 200 people. As officials in California deal with the quake's aftermath, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) stressed the importance of earthquake preparedness in Illinois and encouraged people to take part in a worldwide earthquake drill set for Oct. 16.

"The Napa Valley earthquake is a reminder that earthquakes happen without warning," said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. "With two major seismic zones here in the central U.S., we all need to be prepared to take quick actions to stay safe during an earthquake. The Great ShakeOut is a good way for schools, businesses, families and others to practice the life-saving 'Drop, Cover and Hold On' moves."

At 10:16 a.m. on Oct. 16, millions of people in 39 states, the District of Columbia and several countries around the globe are expected to participate in The Great ShakeOut. The drill is designed to raise awareness about earthquake risks and the ways people can stay safe when the ground starts shaking.

Illinois has participated in ShakeOut drills for the past four years. In October 2013, more than 523,000 Illinoisans took part in the nationwide earthquake drill. To date, more than 237,000 people in Illinois are registered for the October ShakeOut event.

Monken noted that some of the most powerful earthquakes to ever occur in the U.S. happened a little more than 200 years ago in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which reaches into southern Illinois. That series of earthquakes lasted for several months and shaking was felt as far away as the East Coast.

Schools, businesses, government agencies, families and others can register to participate in the drill at www.shakeout.org/centralus. Registered participants will receive additional information

about the drill and earthquake preparedness. While the international drill will take place on Oct. 16, individual drills can be conducted anytime within two weeks of that date.

The drill focuses on the “Drop, Cover and Hold On” protective actions people should take when an earthquake begins: “Drop” down to the floor, take “Cover” under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture, and “Hold On” to the furniture item and be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops.

Additional information about the earthquake risk in Illinois and steps to take before, during and after an earthquake is available at www.Ready.Illinois.gov.