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Illinois Residents Join Millions in Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill

SPRINGFIELD – Today, nearly 300,000 Illinois residents took part in the annual Great Shakeout earthquake drill. At 10:17 a.m., registered participants stopped what they were doing and practiced the Drop, Cover, Hold On technique that is advised for personal protection during an earthquake. With active seismic zones flanking the state’s eastern and western border, it is important that everyone know how to stay safe during an earthquake.

“Whether you are at school, at work, at home or on vacation, an earthquake can happen at any time, anywhere and without warning,” said Acting IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau. “This is why the Shakeout earthquake drill is so important. This preparedness drill raises awareness of the hazards that we often do not think about. The more we practice this critical preparedness drill – Drop, Cover, Hold On - the more prepared we will be if a disaster were to occur.”

The largest earthquake to ever rattle North America occurred in 1811 in New Madrid, Missouri, near southern Illinois. If a similar quake struck the same spot today, according to a 2008 University of Illinois study, the impact would be catastrophic: 3,500 fatalities, 2.6 million without power, \$300 billion in direct economic loss. Most of southern Illinois sits atop one of two major fault zones – the New Madrid Seismic Zone and the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone. We know these faults are active, with sizeable earthquakes reported as recently as 2008.

This morning, IEMA staff visited Glenwood Elementary School in Chatham to discuss the risk of earthquakes in Illinois and the importance of being prepared with the students. At 10:17 a.m., an announcement was broadcast into each classroom that the ShakeOut earthquake drill was beginning. At that time, students practiced the ‘Drop, Cover and Hold On’ actions that should be taken when the earth starts to shake. At the end of the visit, each student was given a homework assignment: Teach mom and dad how to Drop, Cover, Hold On and begin building their home emergency supply kit.

For more information about earthquake risks and additional preparedness tip, visit www.ready.illinois.gov.

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A link to today's IEMA school visit can be found online at <https://www2.illinois.gov/cms/agency/media/video/pages/videos.aspx>