

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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Churches Gear Up for Emergency Response Assistance

JEFFERSON CITY — Southeast Missouri is blessed with volunteers who help their neighbors in need when emergencies and disasters occur. When our area of the state was hard-hit by a recent string of weather-related emergencies, volunteers answered the call and successfully assisted with relief and recovery efforts.

As you can imagine, the swift and organized coordination that must occur in order for communities to respond during these kinds of difficult situations is vital in protecting life and property. Planning and preparedness are key. Churches are among the most eager group of citizens ready to reach out and lend a helping hand in these instances and have always played an essential role in assisting with our state's emergency response efforts.

That's why I want to encourage representatives from all faith congregations in Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard and Wayne counties to attend a symposium planned for 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 8-9 at the First United Methodist Church, 500 N. Main St., in Poplar Bluff. The symposium is designed to help faith communities become actively involved in our region's ongoing efforts to respond to local disasters. Church representatives from Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Iron, Madison, Mississippi and Scott counties have also been invited to participate in the regional symposium.

As the sponsor of last year's successful Missouri's Faith-Based Liaison Act — an initiative that increases cooperation between state government and faith and community-based groups in providing services to Missourians in need — I am very pleased to see churches and other community groups ready to strengthen their role in coordinating Missouri resources for emergency response.

The symposium will focus on providing orientation in mass care, citizen preparedness, and emergency humane missions through which faith-based organizations can assist their local emergency management officials. Church representatives will learn how congregations can become active in community disaster response, teach family preparedness to their members, and help their congregations write a continuity-of-operations plan.

In addition, the program will focus on eight service areas congregations may choose

to embrace. They include:

- Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) and/or Long-Term Recovery Committee development
- Sheltering
- Feeding
- Volunteer management
- Donations management
- Debris removal
- Supporting a multi-agency resource center
- Case management in response to a local disaster

Interested congregations members may register on line at:

<http://www.dps.mo.gov/homelandsecurity/FaithBasedInitiatives/currentevents.html> or

call the University of Missouri Fire and Training Rescue Institute at 800-869-3476.

I hope you will consider sending a representative to the symposium to build upon the progress and success we've made toward helping others in our area when they need it the most.

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