



#### City of Branson

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 02, 2017

Branson Fire Chief, Ted Martin

417.243.2790

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Emergency Management Agencies Prepare for Annual Statewide Severe Weather Tornado Drill Scheduled on Tuesday, March 7, 2017

**Branson, MO (Thursday, March 2, 2017)** – Emergency Management agencies in Taney County, including the Cities of Branson and Forsyth, will join the **National Weather Service and other emergency managers across the state on Tuesday, March 7, for the annual Statewide Severe Weather Tornado Drill at 10:00 a.m.** This special event is designed to test emergency outdoor warning sirens, activation of NOAA Weather Radios (All-Hazards) and to educate the public about severe weather safety with one key goal – to save lives.

Educating the public is one of the key factors in promoting safety as the severe weather season approaches. “We encourage folks to become familiar with the key terms used by the National Weather Service,” stated Branson Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Ted Martin. Remember that a thunderstorm or tornado **watch** means to simply watch the sky and monitor changes in weather conditions. A thunderstorm or tornado **warning** means to take shelter immediately.

**Stay Informed!** Weather information is being disseminated to the public even quicker now with advancements in weather technology and communications with the public. “As watches and warnings are issued, we encourage the public to watch for changing weather conditions and to stay informed as pertinent information is passed on quickly through the media resources and weather alert radios,” stated Chris Berndt, Taney County Emergency Management Director.

“One key tool to stay informed is the All Hazard Risk Radio,” stated Martin. These radios provide instant and up-to-date weather information and severe weather warnings provided by the National Weather Service, and may be programmed to activate for the specific county in which you reside. These radios may be purchased for around \$30.00 at many retailers.

There are also twenty-three outdoor warning sirens located throughout the City of Branson. These sirens are tested monthly and maintained by fire department personnel. “People do need to realize that the outdoor warning sirens are designed to primarily warn people who are located outdoors near area attractions such as golf courses, city parks and school athletic facilities,” stated Martin. Outdoor warning sirens are also located in the communities of Forsyth, Taneyville and Merriam Woods.

The City of Branson provides one additional resource necessary to inform the public about severe weather and other emergency incidents with its “BransonALERTS” system. This system is designed to place automated calls to residential and business phones in the Branson city limits, but can also provide instant weather warnings deliverable to cellular phones as well as text messages and e-mail. For more

information and to sign up for this free program, visit [www.bransonmo.gov](http://www.bransonmo.gov) and click on “Branson ALERTS”.

**Be Prepared – Know Where to Go!** Being prepared and taking shelter are top priorities if you are at home, school or work in the event of a severe storm or tornado. “Identify and use a place of shelter for home, work, and school – typically the lowest level of the building, preferably in an interior room with no windows. Try to get out of large open buildings to avoid injury should the roof collapse. Mobile homes and vehicles provide virtually no shelter in the event of a tornado. People should exit mobile homes and abandon vehicles to seek shelter in a more secure building or low area such as a ditch, then cover their head with their arms, coat or blanket,” added Martin.

The Cities of Branson and Forsyth have earned the “Storm Ready Community” designation by the National Weather Service in Springfield, MO, and Branson was the eighth city in Missouri to be designated “Storm Ready.” This certification was achieved as the fire departments demonstrated their abilities to secure redundant warning systems, establish community education programs, and deliver timely weather information related to severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, flash flooding, and even severe winter weather warnings. As a commercial business, the Branson Airport has also taken preparedness steps to become designated as a “Storm Ready Supporter” by the National Weather Service.

For additional safety tips about severe weather, fire safety, or to learn more about “BransonALERTS,” contact the **City of Branson Fire Department at (417) 243-2790 or online at [www.bransonmo.gov](http://www.bransonmo.gov). Taney County Emergency Management may be reached at (417) 546-7233 or online at [www.co.taney.mo.us](http://www.co.taney.mo.us).**

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Media inquiries related to this content may be directed to Jennifer Langford, Communications Manager, City of Branson at [JLangford@BransonMO.gov](mailto:JLangford@BransonMO.gov) or by calling 417.337.0017.

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#### **About the City of Branson, Missouri:**

Located in Southwest Missouri, the City of Branson is committed to its citizens and to those who visit here, to ensure a safe and environmentally sound community. We will work as a team to maintain and promote the growth of our City, and to provide professional, courteous service to all through fair and open communication. We look to tomorrow, remembering yesterday, dedicated to excellence today.