



EARTHQUAKE!

Know what to do when the shaking starts

Many St. Charles County residents were shaken awake in the early morning hours of April 18 when a magnitude 5.2 earthquake struck near the eastern Illinois town of Bellmont. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has since recorded more than two dozen aftershocks, though most of those have been too small for people to notice.

While our area escaped with no significant damage, the quake does serve as a reminder that St. Charles County lies near the New Madrid Seismic Zone, the highest earthquake-risk area east of the Rocky Mountains.

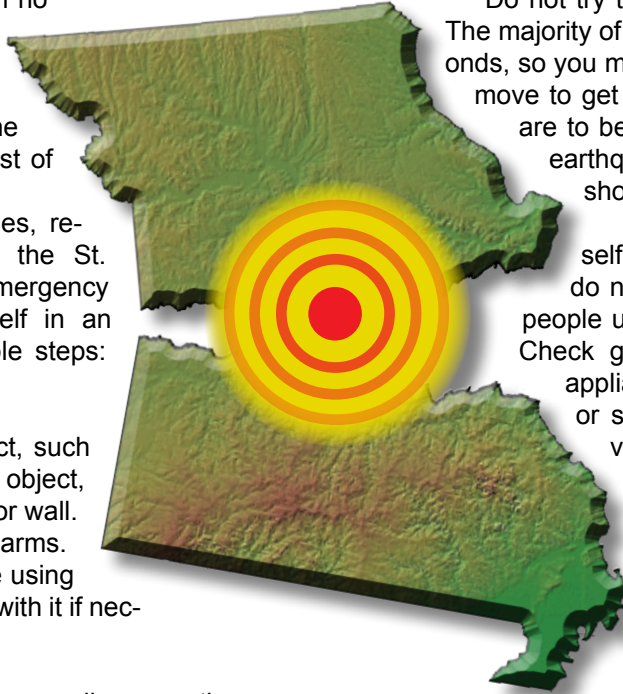
When the next tremor comes, remember this information from the St. Charles County Division of Emergency Management. Protecting yourself in an earthquake involves three simple steps: DUCK, COVER, and HOLD.

If you're inside:

- Duck under a sturdy object, such as a table. If there is no sturdy object, duck and cover against an interior wall.
- Cover your head with your arms.
- Hold on to whatever you're using for cover, and be ready to move with it if necessary.

If you're outside:

- Move away from buildings, power lines, or other overhead hazards.
- Kneel down and wait until the shaking stops.



Do not try to run outside during an earthquake. The majority of quakes are over in less than 30 seconds, so you must act quickly. The farther you try to move to get to a safe place, the more likely you are to be injured by falling objects. Once the earthquake is over, be prepared for aftershocks.

When it's safe to do so, check yourself and those around you for injuries, but do not attempt to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger. Check gas, water, and electrical lines and appliances for damage. If you smell gas or see a broken line, shut off the main valve. Do not switch on the gas or electricity again until the utility companies check your home. Use only flashlights for light, and do not light matches or use any open flames. Do not use the telephone, except in life-or-death situations.

We don't know when the next earthquake will strike, but by being prepared and knowing what to do, you and your family can be ready when the earth moves.

From the Director



Gil Copley

On April 18, 2008 at 4:37 a.m. CDT, a magnitude 5.2 earthquake occurred in the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone. The quake's epicenter was in far eastern Illinois near Bellmont, and the shock was felt in several states, including Missouri. It is believed by many geologists that the Wabash system is related to and/or part of the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ).

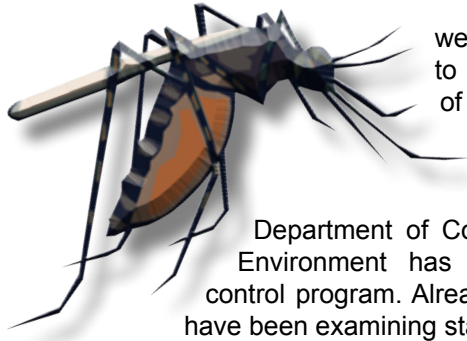
The NMSZ lies within the central Mississippi River valley and runs from northeast Arkansas through southeast Missouri, western Tennessee, and western Kentucky to southern Illinois. Unlike many earthquake fault zones which are the result of plate tectonics at continental boundaries, the New Madrid zone is in the middle of the continent, associated with a failed continental rift. The characteristics of these mid-continent quakes are also different. The 1811-12 quakes were felt over a wider geographic area (ten times larger the 1906 San Francisco earthquake) and New Madrid quakes are focused about three to twelve miles below the surface.

To read the rest of this article, click on [From the Director](#)

PREPARING FOR "THE BIG ONE": More earthquake coverage on Page Two



Mosquito Season Approaching



Spring rains and warm weather have combined to foster the development of hordes of bloodthirsty mosquitoes. To help reduce the problem, the St. Charles County

Department of Community Health and the Environment has rolled out its mosquito control program. Already this spring, inspectors have been examining standing water and applying insect-control chemicals where necessary. Ultimately, when mosquito populations grow to the level of annoyance, spray trucks using small amounts of insecticide will be deployed to attempt to reduce the number of adult mosquitoes.

Where do all these mosquitoes come from? Dr. Barry McCauley, coordinator of the St. Charles County mosquito control program, says, "The almost annual sudden explosion of mosquitoes occurs when hundreds of millions of eggs laid the previous fall hatch because of spring rains and warmer temperatures. Mosquitoes can develop from eggs to biting adults in 7 to 14 days." The good news, according to Dr. McCauley, is that these mosquitoes are not usually the type that transmit disease to humans. The bad news is that they are ferocious biters and can make a stay outdoors miserable. Residents should protect themselves and their children when outside by applying a mosquito repellent. The repellent should be applied according to package instructions.

The health department is also asking residents to play their part in controlling mosquitoes. "An informed public, working in partnership with the health department, can make a huge difference in controlling mosquitoes," says Gil Copley, director of the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment. "County residents can help by eliminating breeding areas in their neighborhoods. This reduces the adult mosquito population, and makes our spraying more effective," Copley said.

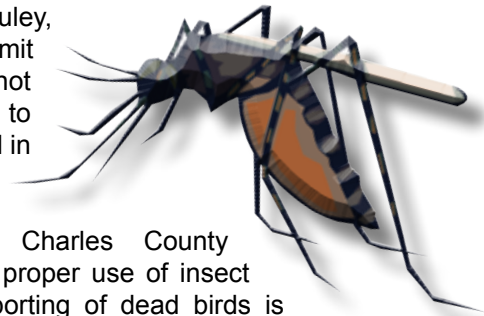
Here are some tips to help control mosquitoes around your home.

- Collect and properly dispose of all useless containers such as tin cans, bottles, buckets, vases, wheelbarrows, and old tires.
- Inspect rain gutters and downspouts to see if they are blocked by leaves or other debris and clean them out if necessary.
- Stack buckets, barrels, tubs, and other containers upside down.
- Cover all boats and canoes, wheelbarrows and wagons, or store them upside down.
- Stock rock garden pools and lily ponds with small fish that feed on mosquito larvae, including the mosquito fish, *Gambusia affinis*.
- Empty and refill birdbaths at least once a week.
- Fill in or drain low places on private property where water may stand for more than a week.
- Empty and clean small wading pools if not in use and several times a week if in use. Properly maintain larger backyard swimming pools.
- Cover rain barrels, cisterns, and fire barrels with 16-mesh screening.

With mosquitoes comes concern about West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases.

According to Dr. McCauley, the mosquitoes that transmit these diseases are not typically seen until mid- to late summer and early fall in this part of the country.

Additional information about St. Charles County mosquito control efforts, proper use of insect repellent, and online reporting of dead birds is available on the health department website, www.scchealth.org. To contact the mosquito control program, call (636) 949-7404.



Get Prepared for Earthquakes with "Ready in 3"

Earthquakes strike without warning, so the best thing to do is to be prepared before disaster happens. To help you in that task, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment offers free disaster preparedness education through "Ready in 3." This program, developed by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, shows residents how to prepare themselves and their family for an emergency. Topics covered in the presentation include an overview of potential threats in Missouri, how to put together an emergency kit, and what to include in a family emergency plan.

To schedule a "Ready in 3" presentation for your school, business, or civic organization, or to request copies of "Ready in 3" educational materials, call (636) 949-7408. For information about earthquake safety and other disaster preparedness topics, visit www.scchealth.org and look for the "Timely Topic" on Earthquake Preparedness near the bottom of the page.

Get Inspired, Get Healthy

National Women's Health Week is May 11-17

The ninth annual National Women's Health Week kicks off on Mother's Day, May 11 with the theme "It's Your Time: Get Inspired. Get Healthy." The weeklong observance empowers women across the country to get healthy by taking action, and celebrates women taking responsibility for their own health through greater knowledge and understanding. Women are encouraged to make their health a top priority and take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life.

The National Women's Health Week initiative is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health. During the week, families, communities, businesses, and other groups work together to educate women about steps they can take to improve their physical and mental health and prevent disease, like:

- Engaging in physical activity most days of the week.
- Eating a nutritious diet.
- Visiting a healthcare provider to receive regular check-ups and preventive screenings.
- Avoiding risky behaviors, like smoking and not wearing a seatbelt.

It is important to celebrate National Women's Health Week to remind women that taking care of themselves is essential to living longer, healthier, and happier lives. Women are often the caregivers for

their spouses, children, and parents. Sometimes, this leads them to neglect their own health. Research shows that when women take care of themselves, the health of their family improves. During National Women's Health Week, it is important to educate our wives, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, and girlfriends about the steps they can take to improve their health and prevent disease. After all, when women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant and everyone will benefit.

As part of National Women's Health Week, women are encouraged to make an appointment with their health care provider for preventive screenings. National Women's Check-Up Day will be celebrated on Monday, May 12.

For more information on National Women's Health Week, visit www.womenshealth.gov.



National Women's Health Week

May 11-17, 2008



Get Onboard with Boating Safety

It's too hot! It doesn't look cool. I know how to swim. Nothing is going to happen to me. These are just some of the excuses people use for not wearing a life jacket while boating. Unfortunately, about 700 people drown every year in recreational boating accidents. More than 90 percent of those victims were not wearing a life jacket. That's why it's imperative to wear a life jacket at all times on the water.

Life jackets are no longer the orange, hot, and bulky vests that are commonly associated with water safety gear. New innovations and developments in life jackets have produced a smaller, sleeker, and much more comfortable life jacket, leaving you with

no reason not to WEAR IT!

Much like a helmet to a biker or skateboarder, life jackets are an essential part of your boating safety equipment and should be worn at all times while on the water. Life jackets are now lighter, less obtrusive, and more attractive than ever before. The new inflatable life jackets or Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) allow mobility and flexibility when boating, fishing, paddling, or hunting. They are also much cooler in the warmer weather. All are designed to be more comfortable than the traditional life jacket.

Accidents can happen any time you are on the water. Although many boaters stow life jackets on their boat, very few choose to wear them. However, if there's an accident, there isn't time to grab a life jacket and put it on properly. If you are faced with a strong current or unfavorable weather conditions, you will not only have trouble making sure you are safe and secure in your life jacket, but you will be unable to help your passengers.

This year during National Safe Boating Week, and throughout the boating season, remember to practice safe and responsible boating. Always wear your life jacket, and be alert and aware while on the water. By practicing these simple steps, you can save your life as well as the lives of the people boating with you. Remember to "Boat Smart. Boat Safe. WEAR IT!" For more information about safe boating, log on to www.safeboatingcampaign.net.

Operation Clean Stream and Earth Day Photo Gallery

