



Disaster Training Available For Community Groups

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Local community groups can better prepare their members for natural disasters through Disaster Resistant Communities Group's series of online training sessions.

Coffee County Emergency Management Agency Director Larry Walker said the organization is not directly related to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but the training follows guidelines FEMA has established.

DRGC began their "Formidable Footprint" series as a way for community groups, such as faith-based organizations and neighborhood watch programs, "to assess the capability of neighborhood residents to work together to prepare for, respond to and recover from a variety of natural disasters," according to their website.

DRGC has offered the online training before, and a new series begins July 30 with earthquake preparation. Earthquakes are an "extremely small" threat here, Walker said.

Other sessions will include hazards residents here do face, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires and influenza pandemics. The disaster-specific sessions will occur once monthly through October and in January and February 2012.

"The exercises are designed as learning opportunities," said Chris Floyd, DRGC vice president of operations. "There are numerous (situational) injects ... (where groups) have to explain their rationale."

"These are fairly good exercises. Some schools have participated in it, so entire classrooms were a part of it," Walker said, noting he has even participated in one of the DRGC's previous sessions.

The sessions are free. For more information about the Formidable Footprint training and a complete schedule, visit www.formidablefootprint.org.