

VIGILANT GUARD FULL SCALE EXERCISE

HELENA, MONTANA

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2009

The State of Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Division, in cooperation with Lewis and Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater counties will be conducting a full scale earthquake exercise beginning on September 15, 2009. There will be extensive activities involving emergency vehicles, military equipment to include helicopters, civilian role players and actors.

Venues will be located at the Montana City Schools, Helena Regional Airport, East Helena Rodeo grounds, Carroll College, St. Pete's Hospital, Fort Harrison, Helena and East Helena schools.

The Montana City School venue will involve "derailed" railroad cars on a rail spur located behind the fields at the school. Montana Rail Link will be moving the cars into place sometime in the afternoon of September 15. The exercise will begin at 6:00 p.m. with emergency response and military vehicles arriving in the school parking lot. There may be observation helicopter activity. The exercise is expected to end by 11:00 p.m.

During this time, the playing fields, trail by the rail spur and the lower parking lot will be closed to allow access and egress for emergency vehicles. There will be an observation area set up. Responders will be wearing full hazardous materials protective equipment and will be focused on their tasks. Observers are asked to please stay clear of the emergency vehicles and the responders and respect the safety procedures that will be implemented.

This purpose of this exercise is to improve the response capabilities of all local, state and federal agencies involved in order to better protect the citizens of Montana in times of natural disaster. The support of the local communities is greatly appreciated.

For further information, please contact Monique Lay, Public Information Officer @ 406-841-3911.