

**Pat Quinn  
Governor**



**Andrew Velasquez III  
Homeland Security Advisor**

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2200 South Dirksen Parkway ~ Springfield, IL 62703-4554 ~ phone: (217) 558-1334 ~ fax: (217) 558-1335  
[www.ready.illinois.gov](http://www.ready.illinois.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2009

## **State Seeks Feedback from Southern Illinois Residents Affected by May 8 Storm**

***Input about emergency information, personal preparedness  
will help state shape earthquake-related messaging***

SPRINGFIELD – Residents in Southern Illinois affected by the May 8 storm are encouraged to participate in a survey that will help the state evaluate how to improve emergency communications and personal preparedness efforts for future disasters in the region. The survey is being conducted by the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF).

“The high winds from the May 8 storm downed thousands of trees, causing widespread power outages and blocking hundreds of roads,” said Andrew Velasquez III, director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the state’s Homeland Security Adviser. “The impact to critical infrastructure from this storm is very similar to the major disruptions that would be caused by an earthquake along the New Madrid or Wabash Valley seismic zones. The information we get from the survey will help us plan for emergency communications following these types of catastrophic events in the region.”

Velasquez said the survey will help state and local emergency managers determine how people in the region receive emergency information before, during and after a disaster. It will also gauge whether or not people used any form of social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, to obtain information related to preparedness or the storm.

The 11-question survey can be completed on the Ready Illinois website ([www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov)). In addition, ITTF personnel are coordinating with local community groups to encourage people in the eight southern Illinois counties recently declared federal disaster areas to participate in the survey. Those counties include Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Jackson, Randolph, Saline, Union and Williamson counties. The survey will be available on the website through the end of August, and results will be posted on Ready Illinois in September.

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“The May 8<sup>th</sup> storm touched the lives of nearly everyone in our Southern Illinois region,” said City of Marion Fire Chief Jack Reed. “This survey will help the state learn more about our experiences during and since this event and, in turn, use this information gathered as they plan for future disasters. I encourage everyone to please take a few minutes and complete this most valuable survey.”

For additional information about disaster preparedness, visit the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).