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Supervisors, Others Learn Emergency Management Skills

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The Leflore County Board of Supervisors learned valuable **EMERGENCY** management skills in a tabletop exercise Tuesday at the Leflore County Courthouse.

U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson chose Greenwood as one of five locations within the state for the exercise. Thompson's choice was made in part to aid the county with grant applications, said District 5's Robert Collins, president of the Board of Supervisors.

The exercise was organized by Fred Randle, the county's **EMERGENCY** management director, and the Institute for Diversity in **EMERGENCY** Management (I-DIEM), a nonprofit based in Georgia.

"Three representatives from I-DIEM along with Mr. Randle gave a scenario of an F-3 tornado and flooding impacting Greenwood and Leflore County," said District 2 Supervisor Reginald Moore.

The board, county officials including the Sheriff's Department and coroner, and Dorothy Glenn, who represents Ward 6 on the Greenwood City Council, provided information regarding the role they would play in the scenario, as did representatives from Pafford **EMERGENCY** Medical Services, Greenwood Utilities and Atmos Energy, Moore said.

"The most useful thing we learned from our interaction with I-DIEM was how to be prepared," said District 4 Supervisor Eric Mitchell.

Collins also emphasized "preparedness in getting information out to the public" as the most important tool the county gained.

Preparedness was also crucial in planning the tabletop exercise. It was conducted on a “blue sky day where we’re not in a stressful environment so when an **EMERGENCY** actually happens there is no chaos within chaos,” Moore said.

The exercise also allowed the county to examine its strengths and weaknesses in **EMERGENCY** preparedness.

The supervisors identified having a plan of action for Leflore County as a strength and needing more communication between agencies as well as between agencies and the community as a weakness.

To aid with communication, the board will seek to invest in a mass dispersion text system. The text system would require no registration and would send **EMERGENCY** alerts to anyone who is using cellular service from a tower in Leflore County, said Moore.

In addition to the text system, the county would prepare scripted messages, said Moore. “In those will be points of contact describing what is happening, where to go for shelter and support and establish a resource center,” he said.

“This will help in the aftermath for people to know where they’re going,” Mitchell added.

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