



UNION COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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News Release

County to Offer Weather Spotter Classes

February 9, 2012, Monroe, NC – Union County Emergency Management will offer basic and advanced SKYWARN® classes on Thursday, March 8 at the Union County Government Center in Monroe. The basic class is from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. and the advanced class follows from 9 p.m. – 10 p.m. Completion of the basic class is required before taking the advanced class.

The effects of severe weather are felt every year by many Americans. To obtain critical weather information, NOAA's National Weather Service, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, established SKYWARN® with partner organizations. SKYWARN® is a volunteer program with nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the National Weather Service.

SKYWARN® storm spotters are part of the ranks of citizens who form the nation's first line of defense against severe weather. When hazardous weather occurs in Union County, local weather spotters will report what is happening in their community to the National Weather Service office in Greenville, S.C. Weather spotters will make reports when they notice weather conditions such as dime-sized or larger hail is falling, winds are 58 mph or greater, trees, power lines or large limbs have been blown down, wind has caused structural damage, roads are partially or totally covered in water, rivers, creeks or streams are flowing out of their banks, there are signs of urban flooding and flooding that risks life or property.

Although SKYWARN® spotters provide essential information for all types of weather hazards, the main responsibility of a SKYWARN® spotter is to identify and describe severe local storms. In the average year, 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and more than 1,000 tornadoes occur across the United States. These events threatened lives and property.

The National Weather Service encourages anyone with an interest in public service and access to communication, such as a HAM radio, to join the SKYWARN® program. Volunteers include police and fire personnel, dispatchers, EMS workers, public utility workers and other concerned private citizens. Individuals affiliated with hospitals, schools, churches, nursing homes or who have a responsibility for protecting others are also encouraged to become a spotter.

Classes on March 8 will cover the basics of thunderstorm development; fundamentals of storm structure; identifying potential severe weather features; information to report; how to report information and basic severe weather safety.

For more information, contact Neal Speer at 704-295-4296 or Dawn Hinkel at 704-283-3627.