

Lewis & Clark **NEWS** Community College

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For Immediate Release

February 4, 2010

Lewis and Clark Offers Free SKYWARN Severe Weather Spotter Training Seminar

Godfrey, Ill. – The National Weather Service and Lewis and Clark Community College have once again teamed up to offer SKYWARN Severe Weather Spotter training for individuals interested in assisting the National Weather Service during severe weather events.

Seminar emphasis is on training individuals in the local community to properly report wind gusts, hail size, rainfall and cloud formations during such events.

“Anyone can call in hail sizes, but SKYWARN spotters are trained to report hail sizes in terms of coin money size, not marbles, since marbles come in many different sizes and the size of the hail is an important indicator of a thunderstorm's life cycle for potential damage,” said John Nell, assistant director at Lewis and Clark and facilitator for this program.

This free seminar will be offered from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 13 on the College's Godfrey campus. The training will be conducted by a meteorologist from the National Weather Service in St. Louis.

“SKYWARN spotters are not, by definition, ‘storm chasers.’ While their functions and methods of reporting severe weather are similar, spotters assist the NWS by reporting what is happening in their backyards. SKYWARN spotters generally stay close to home. Storm chasers often times cover hundreds of miles in a day and chase severe weather for a variety of reasons, including photography or specific research,” Nell said. “Even though the National Weather Service has Doppler radar, they will tell you it cannot see everything happening in the atmosphere. There are times when the NWS relies upon ‘ground truth’ reports from SKYWARN spotters to issue severe weather warnings.”

Participants will learn what to watch for before, during and after a severe thunderstorm or tornado; how to identify storm clouds and severe weather formations and the proper methods of reporting severe weather to the National Weather Service.

The program is suitable for weather watchers of all ages, and does not require any prior knowledge of meteorology or weather awareness.

Though training is free, advance registration is requested to assure seating. For more information or to register, call (618) 468-7000.

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