ARKANSAS ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 19, 2021

Town Hall Set to Prepare State for Earthquakes

NORTH LITTLE ROCK—February is Earthquake Awareness Month, and the Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment's Geological Survey (GS) is partnering with Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC); the geological surveys of Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama; and the Earthquake Program managers within the aforementioned state departments of emergency management, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to ensure residents of the Central United States are prepared for seismic activity.

The Town Hall will be held via Zoom from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. February 26, 2021, and the event will be livestreamed at Facebook.com/AREnergyEnvironment.

GS records more than 200 earthquakes every year in the state. While the Natural State is not located along the edge of a tectonic plate, there are fault lines in the state that have been the epicenter for some of the most powerful earthquakes recorded in the U.S.

Many temblors registering higher than 7 on the Richter scale have occurred along what is known as the New Madrid Seismic Zone. A large stretch of Arkansas from Marked Tree to Memphis is included in this zone.

One such event was a series of quakes in 1811 and 1812. Three very large earthquakes, typically called the New Madrid earthquakes, roiled the very bed of the Mississippi River, causing its waters to be pushed upstream and creating the illusion that the river was flowing backward.

According to CUSEC, there is a 7 to 10% probability of a re-occurrence of the 1811-12 earthquakes within any 50-year window; they also estimate that there is a 25 to 40% probability of a magnitude 6.0 or greater earthquake occurring in the central U.S. within the same period of time.

To learn more about earthquakes in Arkansas, visit: https://www.geology.arkansas.gov/geohazards/earthquakes-in-arkansas.html.

CONTACT: EE-Press@adeq.state.ar.us

###