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PRESS RELEASE

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Taking Responsibility Key to Severe Weather Safety

Wylie, TX, May 14, 2013 – City officials want to remind citizens that individual responsibility and planning are crucial to staying safe during severe weather outbreaks. Emergency Management Coordinator Debbie Buccino cautions residents to not solely rely on the city’s seven outdoor warning sirens to alert them in the event of severe weather.

“The sirens are intended to only warn those who are outdoors to take shelter indoors,” she said. “Someone wearing headphones, watching TV, those who are hard of hearing or deep sleepers, may not hear the outdoor sirens.”

Wylie Fire Rescue recommends the purchase of a weather radio with battery backup in order to be alerted and stay informed about severe weather even if the power goes out. Buccino also recommended signing up for NIXLE Emergency Alerts, the city’s free and easy service used to keep residents informed of impending severe weather by text message, email or both. There are three ways to sign up: text your ZIP code to 888777; go to NIXLE.com; or click the red signup button on the city’s home page, www.Wylie.Texas.gov.

Families should plan a designated shelter in the home. Often it is a bathroom or closet – the most structurally sound room in the home. Discuss it with all family members so that, when a tornado warning is issued, everyone immediately knows what to do and where to go. The city of Wylie doesn’t have a designated public tornado shelter, so it’s crucial that every family have a plan.

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An emergency kit is important too and should be stored in the designated shelter. The ideal kit contains prescription medications and glasses; important family documents, such as insurance policies, identification and bank account records, all in a waterproof container; cash or traveler's checks and change; sleeping bags or blankets for each person; change of clothing;; fire extinguisher; matches in waterproof container; and baby and pet supplies, if needed. For more suggestions, go to www.ready.gov or www.ready.gov/es for the Spanish version.

Understanding the difference between a “watch” and “warning” is also crucial. A watch is issued when the conditions are right for a dangerous weather event to occur. A warning means the event is happening now. It is critical to remember that, when a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, tornadoes can form rapidly under the right conditions very quickly. When a tornado warning is issued, take action; a tornado is on the ground or is imminent.

“All families should take steps to protect themselves,” Buccino said.

Contact the Wylie Office of Emergency Management for more information or for help creating a severe weather plan. Call 972-461-2810 or email Debbie.buccino@wylietexas.gov.

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About Wylie -- Incorporated in 1887, the City of Wylie is located just 24 miles from downtown Dallas in Collin, Dallas and Rockwall Counties. Possessing an outstanding school district, a low crime rate, an ISO #1 rating and an expanding business climate, Wylie (population 44,158) is one of the fastest growing communities in the State of Texas with a 192% increase since 2000.