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Tornado warning sirens delayed by money woes

By JOE MARTUCCI

It appears doubtful the countywide warning system will be ready for the tornado season, less than one month away.

The tornado season runs from March-September. On March 20 of last year, a tornado ravaged West Bloomfield Township, leaving one person dead, dozens injured and an estimated \$7 million in property damage in its wake.

Shortly after, Beverly Hills resident Sue Kuhn began a campaign for a countywide alert system. Federal money was applied for and one grant has been approved, but much must be done to create a countywide warning system.

"It's not likely to be installed by March," said Ron Hill of the Oakland County Civil Defense office this week. Federal officials have notified County Executive Daniel Murphy that a grant to help pay for the first 24 sirens has been approved. Before those sirens can be installed, however, bids must be let and meetings held with affected local governments to determine the local share, Hill said.

Cost of those sirens is \$26,742, Hill said, but the federal Disaster Control and Civil Defense Preparedness Agency will pay 50 per cent of the bill.

"THE REMAINING 50 per cent, or \$13,371, is to be split between the county and local governments. Two more grant applications are still being reviewed," said Hill. A grant of \$300,000 is for 24 additional sirens and "70 receiver timer decoders," which would permit activation of existing sirens throughout the county.

A much smaller grant, \$6,800, would provide the communications link to the central activation switch at Metropolitan Airport.

These two grants also hinge on \$9-50 financing. Some time was lost because two of the grant applications were originally submitted as one. Federal officials required that they be separated and resubmitted, Hill said.

Hill has "no idea" when the system would be operational because of all the red tape involved.

"When you start dealing with the federal government, you never can tell," he said.

The tornado warning advisory com-

Ski tours set for February

Farmington Area Recreation Commission (FARC) in cooperation with San Marino Golf Club will present a "Weekend Ski Touring Spectacular" beginning Feb. 18.

A moonlight cross-country ski tour and bonfire is scheduled for 7:30-10:30 p.m. Feb. 18 at the golf club. Ski rental, if necessary, is the only fee.

A cross-country ski golf tournament is scheduled for Feb. 19 beginning at 1 p.m. with a \$2 entry fee. Skis are required for the event in which the player will be on cross-country skis and hitting a tennis ball to compete in the game. A trophy will be awarded for the lowest score.

Events for Feb. 20, beginning at noon, include a free waxing clinic and "Ski Tour 77," a non-competitive family event. Upon the completion of a two-mile trail, all participants will receive a special participation patch. A \$1 fee is required.

All events will take place at the San Marino Golf Club, 26634 Halslead, (one-half mile south of Twelve Mile) in Farmington Hills.

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