

Siren crusade finds backers on all fronts

By ALICE COLLINS

Sue Kuhn's race with the weather to have civil defense sirens used as tornado watch alerts is finding enthusiasm and cooperation on many fronts.

Since the Beverly Hills woman was shocked into action by West Birmingham's tornado devastation, she's talked with hundreds of individuals and officials.

"Everybody thinks it's a wonderful idea," she said. "But we've got to do it

now... before what happened becomes only a memory."

At the Oakland County level, Disaster Control and Civil Defense Director John Dent said there is a plan on the books now to activate a countywide tornado watch using civil defense sirens—the same plan Mrs. Kuhn is promoting.

"We'd like to get something going on April 15," she said. "I have an educational program," said Dent.

DENT DIRECTS civil defense activities in 34 communities in the county. Seven cities, including Birmingham and Southfield, operate their own programs.

There were indications this week that both Birmingham and Southfield would be willing to meet with Dent and other units in the county to work out a unified system.

The Birmingham City Commission Monday night voted to direct the city administration to look into a standardized warning system with surrounding communities.

Southfield Civil Defense Director Arthur Becker said, "Mrs. Kuhn certainly has the spirit of going ahead. This is a good thing and we'd be happy to sit down and talk with the county about it."

"I'd be happy to call representatives of all these communities together to work out a unified plan," Dent said.

The estimated cost to repair and replace

the necessary number of civil defense sirens at strategic locations throughout the county has been set at \$150,000.

"IT WOULD COST an additional \$50,000 to \$75,000 to make it a uniform, radio-activated system," Dent added. Federal matching funds might be made available if an approved plan is devised.

In Mrs. Kuhn's home community of Beverly Hills, Village Manager Thomas Good said he was determining what equipment is available and planned to put together a cost package. "Whether the council could consider and react to."

"Whatever has to be done, has to be done on a wider basis than Beverly Hills," but Mrs. Kuhn's suggestion is a good one," continued Good. "It's like anything else, it has to start small as it perhaps this is a beginning."

The standardized plan being discussed by Mrs. Kuhn, Dent and Becker is to use the air raid sirens of let persons know there is a tornado watch in effect. A "watch" means that threatening weather conditions exist which could produce a tornado.

Persons would then be informed and move to a radio or television set to watch for a tornado warning. A "warning" means a tornado has been sighted and im-

mediate cover should be sought.

DEE HENNINGER of Bloomfield Hills has been concerned about the tornado watch system for some time. She and Dent made several speaking engagements and radio and television appearances in an effort to inform the public two years ago.

"I'm willing to volunteer and do anything I can to help Mr. Dent get this thing going now," Mrs. Henninger said.

"The last time it was decided to leave it (use of sirens) to the discretion of man-

agers in the various communities," she said.

"We were very nice and gave them the opportunity to move ahead with their own programs... they haven't done it and it's high time we take it out of their hands."

"I agree with Mrs. Kuhn," she said. "There's far more possibility of severe weather than a bombing attack. The warning should be uniform and come under the county civil defense."

Using volunteer fire department "call-

sirens in the program has also been considered, since most departments now use pocket beepers.

IN TROY the department already has a policy of using the fire sirens—a continuous blast—to warn of approaching tornadoes rather than for a watch.

Dent said three-to-five minute steady tones would be used to inform the public of the tornado watch. The warning tone is reserved by law for nuclear attack.

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Tornado damage aid deadline nears

Victims of the March 30 tornado that hit West Bloomfield and Farmington have until May 15 to apply for federal aid.

The Wednesday deadline for filing for assistance was extended after Oakland County Civil Defense Director John Dent discovered Tuesday that many people didn't even know they could get help.

"Grants up to \$5,000 have been made available," Dent said, explaining that federal disaster aid is designed to help pay for damages not covered by insurance.

Those interested in seeking aid should call 337-7655 for information.

Dent said he became concerned about the Wednesday deadline when by Monday evening only two victims of the tornado had reported to the disaster assistance center set up at Waterford Oaks community building, 2800 Watkins Lake Road, Waterford.

The center was manned by representatives of the Red Cross, Internal Revenue Service, County Social Services, State Bar Association and Small Business Administration to advise victims seeking financial aid.

COSTS FOR temporary housing, not covered by insurance, may be claimed. Low-interest loans to small businesses, tornado and ice storm debris cleanup and reimbursement to municipalities are also among items for which information is available.

Federal aid became available when President Gerald Ford declared the county a major disaster area following the recent ice storm. Friday, it was announced that tornado victims would be eligible for federal

aid under the same declaration.

OTHER EMERGENCY help has been made available to tornado victims.

Emergency, automobile and homeowners insurance claim centers have been set up for persons insured through the Automobile Club of Michigan.

Any auto club member insured tornado damage can receive attention by contacting the Farmington office at 478-1120.

Tornado victims in need of cardboard boxes to collect and store belongings can get them without charge, said West Bloomfield Township Clerk Betty Sue Depree.

Templeton Moving and Storage Co. in Sylvan Lake will give the customs to anyone who presents an identification card, which is available at the clerk's office at township hall, 4480 Orchard Lake Road.

OCC hosts spring dance

Oakland County Community College will have its second annual spring celebration dinner dance Friday, April 8, from 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. in the Fountain Room of the Roosterball entertainment complex, Marquette Drive, near East Jefferson in Detroit.

The evening includes a dinner, champagne toast and dancing. Tickets are \$15 per person and \$25 per couple. Proper attire is requested.

Liberty trees to be planted

Representatives of the Farmington Area Naturalists and Earth Alive will dedicate a liberty tree for each of the cities, Farmington and Farmington Hills, Monday, April 26.


The Farmington Hills tree, planted in front of the city hall on Eleven Mile west of Orchard Lake will be dedicated at 7:30 p.m. As soon as that is completed, the group will drive to the Farmington city park on Drake to dedicate the Farmington tree.

Mrs. Eleanor Douglass of the naturalists club says the trees are maples "because the patriots met under a maple tree."

She says the idea came from the naturalists club. Since the club didn't have any money, Nancy Kourtyouran of Earth Alive said her group would be willing to purchase trees from some of the money earned by the glass recycling project.

The public is invited to attend the dedication.

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