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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2021

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Local Emergency Planning Committee to Hold HazMat Drill June 14

DELAWARE, Ohio — Delaware County’s Local Emergency Planning Committee, an interagency group of first responders, industry representatives, and other local partners, will hold a hazardous materials drill on June 14 in Lewis Center. The event marks a return to in-person preparedness exercises for the county.

“The Covid-19 pandemic had forced us all to put a hold on in-person drills,” said Sean Miller, director of the Delaware County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (EMA), which is coordinating the drill. The full-scale exercise, as it’s called by participants, will take place Monday morning, June 14, at the eastern terminus of Home Road. Dozens of “players” from local fire, emergency medical and law enforcement agencies in Delaware County will respond to a call involving a fictional spill of a deadly hazardous material. Another important aspect of the exercise is that additional players will staff an Emergency Operations Center located in Delaware County’s EMA headquarters at 10 Court St., Delaware, to support on-scene operations. The two groups will communicate with each other during the drill.

“The players won’t know until that morning when they get the call to respond what they’re dealing with,” Miller explained. “And then, throughout the span of the roughly two-hour exercise, the drill ‘controllers’ will continue to inject additional information into the scenario that really tests them on their response skills.”

Once the drill is completed, the players will gather at Orange Township’s Fire Station 361 and at the Emergency Operations Center to self-assess their response and to receive feedback from observers.

The county last conducted a full-scale exercise in 2016. The June 14 exercise is representative of the high level of collaboration in Delaware County, despite lingering challenges associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic

“We are very fortunate to have such an active Local Emergency Planning Committee in Delaware County,” Miller said. “Community-based coordination is so important to maintaining preparedness and for rapid, effective response when and if we are ever challenged to respond to a disaster here.”

For more information about Delaware County’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, please visit its website at: www.delcoema.org and on Facebook and Twitter: @delcoema

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Attachment: photo from 2016 LEPC hazardous-materials drill. Credit: Delaware County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

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