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# New role for disaster-aid chief

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

**HIGHLAND HEIGHTS** - In January, David McClure was awarded the Northern Kentucky University Alumni Association award for distinguished service for his work in assisting in disasters such as the World Trade Center attacks and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

This weekend McClure will continue that distinguished service by heading up a disaster drill at St. Luke Hospitals as unit commander of Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), KY-1.

The disaster drill will be held Saturday as approximately 40 participants practice delivering care in unusual circumstances.

**ADVERTISEMENT** "Part of being prepared for a disaster is to solve problems you did not expect during your planning. Essential planning principles train disaster workers to 'adapt and overcome.' "

"The work we do all centers around safety. Our first priority is to make the scene safe. After accomplishing a reasonable safe setting we can proceed with our usual management of the situation," said McClure.

DMATs are part of the National Disaster Medical System. DMATs are located around the country.

They are made up of 100-300 volunteers with various medical, logistical and managerial training.

"Many of the founding members of our team were involved either directly or indirectly with the Beverly Hills fire. It sparked interest in being prepared for the unexpected," said McClure.

McClure began his work in disaster preparedness during the late 1970s with the Red Cross. A nurse since 1979, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from NKU in 1983. After joining St. Luke Hospital in 1987, he became a member of group that would eventually become DMAT KY-1. KY-1 was a charter group formed along with teams in New Mexico and North Carolina. Their first deployment was to Hurricane Andrew's aftermath in 1992. There are now 55 DMAT teams across the country and fall under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security.

DMAT KY-1 had a full deployment after Hurricane Katrina. Its 35 members set up in New Orleans near Jefferson Parish to relieve the overwhelmed East Jefferson Hospital. The team members are willing to travel anywhere to assist during disasters. However,



ZOOM

The Enquirer/ernest Coleman

David McClure, winner of the Northern Kentucky University Alumni Association award for distinguished service, will lead a disaster-aid drill this weekend at St. Luke Hospital.

McClure emphasized that disaster assistance begins at home.

"I would like people in the community to have interest in becoming prepared for disaster situations. It really is up to each individual to be prepared. It takes time for help to get to where it is needed and sometimes the amount of help needed is overwhelming. Each individual needs to have a personal plan to survive until help arrives," said McClure.

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