Environmental Public Health Tracking

USING EPHT DATA AND RESOURCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Providing Easy-to-Access Information During Extreme Heat Events

What was the problem/situation?

Missouri residents experience many days of extreme heat from May to September each year. Some people, especially the elderly, do not have or use air conditioning in their homes. Many counties and cities in the state have cooling centers as part of their "All Hazards" preparedness planning. The public needed easy access to information about these centers.

How was Tracking involved?

The Missouri Tracking Program and the Division of Senior and Disability Services joined forces to develop an online map of cooling centers available to all Missourians. Working together, the Tracking Program and its partners identified cooling centers on a searchable map. The map includes a center's address, phone number, and hours of operation, when such information is provided. It is searchable by address, ZIP code, or county. Information is updated weekly. The interactive map is available on the DHSS Web site from May through September of each year.

What action was taken to resolve the problem?

This interactive map allows Missouri residents to locate a cooling center close to their homes. They then can spend time in cooling centers during extreme heat events. A center allows people to remain comfortable without endangering their health or increasing their electric bills. The map was promoted by a major utility company, the United Way, the Public Service Commission, the State Emergency Management Agency, and other organizations through Web sites and newsletters.