

Hole in Kentucky will help predict quakes

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Workers in Kentucky are drilling a 2,000-foot hole that will become the deepest seismic observatory in the Midwest.

The project, located at the edge of a soybean field near Sassafras Ridge, will monitor the New Madrid Seismic Zone where three jumbo earthquakes shook the Midwest in the early 1800s, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports.

The New Madrid Seismic Zone is an area roughly centered on New Madrid, Mo. in the state's bootheel.

Once the drillers reach bedrock 2,000 feet down, they will put a steel casing in the hole and fix a seismometer to the bottom, allowing geologists to monitor the Earth's rumblings.

A spokesman for the U.S. Geological Survey says the seismometer will allow less uncertainty in hazard estimates.

Although it is quite expensive, the spokesman says scientific drilling is becoming more and more common.

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