Lafayette's Civil Defense director, Eddie Richard, names Lafayette as a possible target area for a nuclear attack.

"Lafayette is one of the target areas, as are Baton Rouge, Shreveport, New Orleans, and Lake Charles," Richard said. "However, Lafayette is not top priority because it has only the administrators of the petrochemical industry here."

Richard says that shelters in Lafayette parish would accommodate three-fourths of the population of Lafayette. "It would be rather crowded, though," he says.

He expects that an emergency would still allow adequate time for citizens to find shelter.

"I am told that if the U.S. were to suspect a nuclear attack, it would be brought about in a way similar to the Cuban Missile crisis," he said. "Events would happen beforehand and would lead the government to suspect an attack and consequently alert us, the Civil Defense in Louisiana."

"Then they would put us on standby," he said.

"If we are warned beforehand, there is a chance of surviving the attack, depending on intensity," he explains. "But the days after, when you get out into the street and the water is contaminated and the food is contaminated, the chances of surviving are lessened."

Asked if he thought the ABC television movie, "The Day After," was an accurate depiction of the aftermath of nuclear war, Richard replied: "I think it was very realistic."

Details of shelters in Lafayette are available through the office of Civil Defense located in the basement of the courthouse. USL is the site for 26 fallout shelters. In a Civil Defense publication, Community Shelter plan, a number of USL dormitories and other buildings are listed as being fallout shelters.

Among those listed is Judice Hall, where the Vermilion office is located. Judice hall has no basement, many large windows and walls that are already falling down. However, according to the publication, any building of heavy construction is suitable as a fallout shelter.

Along with Judice Hall, Harris Dorm, McNaspy Stadium, DeClouet Hall, Martin Hall, Foster Hall, Broussard Hall and Baker Huger Dorm are among those listed as shelters. However, listings of shelters such as the "New Math Building" and "New Men's Gym" reveal that the brochure is quite outdated.

This publication, available through the Lafayette Civil Defense Agency, gives detailed instructions on what to do in case of a nuclear emergency. "Save this publication," the pamphlet says, "it may save your life."

Another information booklet on nuclear emergency is the 1968 book, "In Time of Emergency: A Citizen's Handbook on Nuclear Attack and Natural Disasters." The book advises planning: "Find out from your local government your local plan for emergency action. Determine the specific actions you and members of your family are expected to take.

It also advises that citizens "understand the hazards of nuclear attack."

"If the U.S. should be attacked," the book explains, "the people who happened to be close to a nuclear explosion -- in the area of heavy destruction -- probably would be killed or seriously injured by the blast, or by the heat of the nuclear fireball."

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