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INFORMATION RELEASE

Disaster Preparedness Month – September 2010

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Solano County Office of Emergency Services

When a disaster happens, you have to be prepared to deal with having no electricity, no gas, no water and no telephone service. The solution cannot be to use your credit card because the local businesses will more than likely be closed and emergency services will be responding elsewhere. What will you do until help arrives?

The answer: Refer to your family disaster plan.

September is National Disaster Preparedness Month. The Solano County Office of Emergency Services urges everyone to use the month to sit down with their families to develop or revisit their family disaster plan.

Your workplace should have a disaster plan; get to know it. Find out about the disaster plans at your children's school and the other places where your family spends time. Then meet with your family to create your own plan. Discuss the information you have gathered and why it is important to prepare for disasters. Experts stress that it is important to share responsibilities and to work together as a team.

As part of your disaster plan, it is a good idea to pick two rendezvous locations: one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire, and another outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Everyone, including small children, should know your address and phone number.

Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact" for everyone to call if the family gets separated. After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance.

Don't forget to have a plan for your pets. Pets are not usually allowed inside shelters, so arrangements should be secured beforehand.

The next step is to implement your family disaster plan so it may be activated at any time.

- Post emergency numbers (fire, police, ambulance, etc.) by all phones
- Teach children how, when to call 911
- All should learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and First Aid

Dedicated to Community Service

- All should learn how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches
- All should learn how to use a fire extinguisher
- Conduct a home hazard hunt; inspecting your home for items that can move, fall, break or cause a fire, and correcting them
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit
- Determine the best escape routes from every room in your home
- Find the safe spots in your home for different types of disasters
- Practice and maintain your plan
- Ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers and safety rules
- Conduct drills
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher according to manufacturer's instructions
- Smoke alarms should be checked monthly and batteries changed at least once a year

Work with your neighbors for neighborhood plan

Something else to keep in mind is the value of neighbors during a difficult time. Working with neighbors can save lives. Why not meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives? If you are a member of a neighborhood organization, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors special skills and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for child care in case parents cannot get home - that way, all of the children in your neighborhood can be safe.

Disaster Supplies Kit

Your kit should include enough supplies to meet you and your families needs for at least three days. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy to carry, water-resistant containers, such as backpacks, duffle bags or suitcases. It is a good idea to keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car. Your disaster supplies kit should include:

- At least a 3-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that will not spoil
- One change of clothing and footwear per person
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A first aid kit, including prescription medicines
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys
- Cash
- Special items for infant, elderly or disables family members
- An extra pair of glasses

For more disaster preparedness information, go to www.solanocounty.com/oes

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