



Six Years after Charley, Red Cross is Better Prepared *Local leaders concerned with a complacent community*

August 10, 2010 – As we near the six-year anniversary of Hurricane Charley, local officials fear the businesses and residents of Lee and Collier Counties have forgotten the importance of disaster preparedness.

With an eight-foot storm surge and 150 mph winds in northern Lee and Charlotte Counties, Hurricane Charley was the strongest storm our community had seen in over 40 years, catching thousands of property owners off guard and causing several deaths.

Since that tragedy, Red Cross chapters across the state have worked effectively to improve their ability to respond and to strengthen their mission of teaching preparedness skills to the community.

Still, with few weather events since Hurricane Charley and Wilma, Red Cross officials are concerned that our community is once again becoming complacent.

“Individual and family preparedness is the key to surviving a hurricane and minimizing the chances of loss and injury to you and your family – everyone should take a little time every day to be as prepared as possible should Mother Nature send another storm our way this year” said Jim von Rintel, CEO of the Southern Gulf Coast Region (Lee and Collier Counties).

The Red Cross recommends three basic steps to take to be prepared for this hurricane season.

- **Get a kit** - Build a disaster supplies kit that includes enough supplies for each family member for at least three days. Include copies of important paperwork like insurance policies, contact info, driver’s license, etc.
- **Make a plan** - which includes a family communications plan and evacuation plan. Coordinate your plan with your child’s school, your work and community communication plans. Practice this plan with your entire family.
- **Be informed** – Know how you will stay updated on weather emergencies and find out how local officials will contact you in a disaster.

For more detailed information on how you or your business can be prepared for a hurricane, visit the American Red Cross website redcross.org. If you would like the Red Cross to present your business, association or group with disaster preparedness information, contact either the Lee (239-278-3401) or Collier County (239-596-6868).

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation’s blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.

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