

Disaster News Update –August 27 to September 2, 2007

RECENT DISASTER / HAZARD ACTIVITY (Past 7 days)

- **Drought:** Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, South Dakota, Nebraska, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama
- **Extreme Heat:** California, North Carolina, Arizona, Missouri,
- **Fire:** Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Tennessee, Florida
- **Heavy Rains / Flooding:** Wisconsin, Georgia
- **Tornado:** Iowa

CURRENT FEMA MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS (Past 30 days)

- [New York](#): Severe Storms, Flooding and Tornado (8/31)
- [Oklahoma](#): Severe Storms, Flooding and Tornadoes (8/31)
- [Illinois](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/30)
- [Nebraska](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/29)
- [Ohio](#): Severe Storms, Flooding and Tornadoes (8/27)
- [Wisconsin](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/26)
- [Oklahoma](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (8/24)
- [Minnesota](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/23)
- [Minnesota](#): Bridge Collapse (8/21 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Texas](#): Hurricane Dean (8/18 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Maine](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/8)
- [Vermont](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/3)
- [Micronesia](#): Drought (7/31 – Emergency Declaration)
- Fire Declarations: [Idaho \(8/30\)](#), [Idaho2 \(8/30\)](#), [Idaho \(8/29\)](#), [Montana \(8/19\)](#), [Hawaii \(8/17\)](#), [Montana \(8/16\)](#), [Hawaii \(8/14\)](#), [Wyoming \(8/12\)](#), [Montana \(8/4\)](#)

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS

New disaster ID card could keep some volunteers out (Associated Press, 9/2)

Retiree Gene O'Brien hurried to the World Trade Center site after Sept. 11, 2001, as a volunteer helping to shuttle supplies to police and fire workers. Some days, his only ID to get into the disaster site was a tattoo on his forearm. "A couple times I showed them my Marine tattoo, and they said go ahead," recalled O'Brien, adding that he and other volunteers also came up with their own makeshift identification cards. "We didn't forge anything, we just made them up with our own pictures and at one point we copied a UPC code off a Pepsi can and they were as good as gold," said the Scarsdale resident. It might not be so easy the next time disaster strikes. In an effort to provide better control and coordination, the federal government is launching an ambitious ID program for rescue workers to keep everyday people from swarming to a disaster scene. A prototype of the new first responder identification card is being issued first responders in the Washington,

D.C., area. Proponents say the system will get professionals on scene quicker and keep the untrained from making tough work more difficult. But they also know it is a touchy subject, particularly for those devoted to helping in moments of crisis.

Volunteers Help ND Town (Disaster News Network, 9/1)

Hundreds of volunteers were expected to stream into the tiny tornado-wrecked town of Northwood over the long Labor Day weekend as the community continued to recover from the storm. Individuals and large groups, including students from the University of Minnesota-Crookston and the University of North Dakota, have been arriving to assist the 1,000 residents of the town devastated by Sunday's EF-4 tornado. The storm killed one person, injured 18 others and damaged about 90 percent of the homes in the town. Lutheran Disaster Response, working in conjunction with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, was coordinating the volunteer effort. With access to the town still restricted – power was still being restored - volunteers were being bused into the town. A curfew remained in place, enforced by both state police and the National Guard, but was expected to be eased.

Volunteers Respond in Ohio and Wisconsin (Disaster News Network, 9/1)

Thousands of residents in Ohio and Wisconsin continued to clean up their homes after last week's severe flooding in the Midwest. More than 2,100 homes across six counties in Ohio were impacted by the flooding, including 750 that were damaged or destroyed, according to preliminary damage estimates from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. The six counties - Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Putnam, Richland, and Wyandot - all have received federal disaster declarations. In Wisconsin, flooding affected more than 1,500 homes, with 50 homes destroyed and at least 300 others suffering major damage. Federal disaster declarations have been announced for five counties: Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk and Vernon. FEMA was continuing its damage assessments in both states. In Ohio, Findlay, Bucyrus, Shelby and Ottawa were among the communities hardest hit. The Rev. Nichole Mazza-Fredly, pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Findlay, said piles of flood-ruined belongings sitting in front of homes in the town was heartbreaking. "What's really affecting me personally is seeing the drastic devastation left in the city now," she said. Mazza-Fredly's church was among the buildings damaged. As floodwaters rose, sewage backed up into the church's basement, which serves as the fellowship hall and houses the kitchen, the furnace and Sunday School rooms.

Program Employs Neighbors as First Responders (Government Technology, 8/30)

The elderly, those with handicaps and other vulnerabilities are most at risk during a natural or man-made disaster. During such an event, first responders must often comb neighborhoods house-by-house to look for those in need or in trouble. A program called Safely Out (http://www.citizenvoice.org/safely_out_home.shtml), celebrating its first anniversary today, has a way for friends and neighbors to help. Citizen Voice, a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, has piloted Safely Out by distributing thousands of kits which contain, among other things, a door tag. On one side, it says "Need Help" and on the other "Safely Out." The tags contain information which responders can use to help reunite survivors and their families. In its first year, Citizen Voice has secured over a

third of a million dollars in funding for the national pilot project to distribute kits to the vulnerable in the greater Sacramento region. It is believed to be the first strategic approach in the U.S. targeting the most vulnerable during disasters that involves the entire community in the evacuation effort. Sacramento County has said it will support Citizen Voice's Safely Out Project with \$250,000. Such a sizable financial partnership will secure 25,000 kits for residents of Sacramento County who are most at risk in a disaster. Sacramento, with its extensive system of river levees, is at risk of flooding. Recently, the organization distributed 1,200 kits to homeowners in the path of the Angora Fires in South Lake Tahoe.

Stockton, CA volunteers help rebuild after Katrina (Stockton Record, 8/29)

Even two years later, photographs and television images do not adequately convey the magnitude of damage to the Gulf Coast. In May, a team of eight men and women sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Stockton got to see the devastation firsthand. I was among the group that spent a week taping, priming and painting Thomas Beard's small duplex in Pascagoula, Miss. We were among 31,350 volunteers who have donated 1.2 million hours to the relief effort through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program since the storm. The church's Louisville, Ky.-based headquarters estimates crews have provided about \$20 million in volunteer wages to completely rebuild 565 houses and work on 3,380 homes in five communities along the Gulf Coast. The church still seeks volunteer work teams and is committed to working in the region for at least another three years. On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, at its peak a Category 5 storm, made landfall in coastal Louisiana and Mississippi, battering New Orleans, Biloxi and other towns along a 90-mile section of the Gulf of Mexico. Gale-force winds and unrelenting rain filled houses, flooded streets and breached levees. Yachts and riverboat casinos were unmoored. People and animals were killed. Others were forced to evacuate, and a region was rendered practically homeless. "It was like a tropical storm that just didn't end," said Beard, whose duplex was flooded with almost a yard of water within the storm's first 45 minutes.

FEMA rescinds insurance rules (Houston Chronicle, 8/28)

FEMA has reversed an insurance policy that would have left nonprofits and public entities on the hook for millions of dollars in the event of disasters. "We have rescinded that policy," said Gil Jamieson, the agency's associate deputy administrator for Gulf Coast recovery. "It has caused a real furor down here. This was not the message we wanted to send to the business community." Hospitals, schools, museums and others were outraged after they found a little-publicized June 4 memo on FEMA's Web site saying that once the agency has paid an insurance deductible for a nonprofit or governmental entity, that group must begin paying its own deductible starting with the next disaster. Some large nonprofits have deductibles of tens of millions of dollars and are used to getting help from FEMA in paying them. The rules spelled out in the memo also required groups that receive money from FEMA to carry insurance coverage at least to the value of their public assistance grants, a requirement that is difficult to fill with the limited insurance capacity on the Gulf Coast after Katrina. Though the stricter levels of insurance coverage spelled out in the June memo have been rescinded, previously existing

insurance requirements remain in place for nonprofits, and FEMA has vowed to revisit those requirements after consulting with the business community.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS

[MS Town Gets Aid From Church Groups](#) (Washington Post, 9/2)

The sweat and donations from religious groups are bringing hope and new homes to many residents in this tiny community, still struggling two years after Hurricane Katrina left much of the Mississippi Gulf Coast in ruins. Adolph Harris, who watched his house get washed away while he clung to a nearby tree as the storm roared ashore, will move this month into a new home built with money and volunteers from a Kempton, Ind.-based Christian organization. Standing outside his new home, one of 35 new homes built by the International Disaster Emergency Service, Harris said he often thinks about the miracle of his survival. "I was up the tree from 8:30 that morning until about 7:30 that afternoon," he said. "If that tree had fallen that I was in, I would have been in that water 25-30 feet of water with all those moccasin snakes and, you know, it was just a scary, scary situation to be in." While the memories of metal flying like missiles off neighboring homes still haunt him, Harris said his prayers have been answered. Volunteers also helped bring back the West Hancock County Volunteer Fire Department. FEMA made a lot promises, "but we got tired of waiting," Fire Chief Kim Jones said. "So, we went ahead and took what little insurance money we had and donations from other fire departments and church organizations and individuals and rebuilt our station," said Jones, 52. FEMA also provided \$216,464 in public assistance to help replace the fire department's equipment, clothing, and a radio system, agency spokesman Eugene Brezany said. The rebuilding also has changed the lives of the volunteers.

[Disaster Recovery Training in Texas](#) (Disaster Volunteer Blog, 8/30)

Church World Service and its many partners are leading a series of "Disaster Recovery Trainings" around Texas during the first two weeks of September. The schedule includes:

- Gathering and Welcome
- Organizing for Recovery
- Care for the Caregiver

Break out Sessions on:

- Strategic Planning Administration, Financing and Committees, Taskforces and Working Groups
- Managing Cases, CAN, Criteria for assistance
- Issues facing Clients & Advocacy & Diversity
- Managing Volunteers
- Managing Rebuilding
- Staffing, Collaborations & Equipping

According to Church World Service: Community leaders, Social Service Organizations, Church leaders, Recovery groups, Caseworkers, Long Term Recovery committee members....anyone dedicated to helping rebuild homes and lives, should go. The leadership for these trainings include representatives from FEMA, Lutheran Disaster

Response, American Red Cross, United Methodist Conference, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Texas Interfaith/Interagency Disaster Response, TX Council of Churches, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and many others. Each training session lasts one day from 9:00am to 3:15pm.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS

President Declares Major Disaster For Oklahoma (FEMA, 8/31)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Oklahoma to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes during the period of May 24 to June 1, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes in Bryan, Comanche, Cotton, Logan, Pontotoc, Seminole, Stephens, and Tillman counties. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Philip E. Parr as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Parr said damage surveys have been scheduled and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are completed.

President Declares Major Disaster For New York (FEMA, 8/31)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of New York to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms, flooding, and tornado on August 8, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Queens County. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Marianne C. Jackson as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Jackson said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are complete.

WI Flood victims express differing views on reconstruction (Daily Reporter, 8/31)

Officials heard a variety of views from local residents as more than 100 villagers turned out for a community meeting on their preferences for reconstruction in the wake of this month's flooding. Some said Wednesday they did not want to rebuild because they believed it would cost more than their homes were worth or they did not feel safe with the Kickapoo River there. "It's not about the money at all," said Laura Negronida, who

lives on Gay Street, which still remains partly under water. "I cannot feel safe in my home ever again." Mike Pettit, who remembers other floods at Gays Mills in 1978 and 1993, said a dike would have to be built around the village's business district or it would lose its tax base. Some who want to move to higher ground said they were still committed to staying in Gays Mills. "I don't want to leave this village," said Negronida. "More than ever, I want to live here. I just can't live on Gay Street any more." Village trustee Pat Brockway said many residents are still trying to figure out how to fill out paperwork for FEMA to get aid. "Most of the people came here expecting to find out information," he said. "People don't want to be in limbo; they want to know what to do to get back into their homes." More than 75 homes in Gays Mills were damaged when water surged through the village and other small towns along the Kickapoo River earlier this month.

Flooded MN towns see outpouring of help (St. Paul Pioneer Press, 8/31)

When Jon Muller drove to Rushford, Minn., with the ambulance his employer, Stillwater's Lakeview Hospital, was donating to the flood-stricken town, he knew the vehicle would be put to use eventually. He didn't think it would make an emergency run the moment it got to town. "We arrived in Rushford like 10:15 a.m.," he recalled of the trip last Saturday. "We pulled into town, went to their command post, and just as we pulled in, they got five ambulance calls at the same time. We weren't even in town a minute before we got a call." Lakeview Hospital is among hundreds of people, businesses and other institutions that have made donations or volunteered help in flooded southeastern Minnesota. Flash flooding Aug. 18-19 was responsible for seven deaths and at least \$67 million worth of damage to homes, businesses and public infrastructure, according to an estimate released by Gov. Tim Pawlenty this week. Numerous small communities in Dodge, Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties were affected. Even before the floodwaters receded, volunteers began offering aid, said April Sutor, a vice president of United Way of Olmsted County who is helping coordinate the volunteer effort. She said thousands of people have offered help, and the available jobs for volunteers are filled through Sept. 7. (Those wanting to volunteer can register online at uwolmsted.org.)

President Declares Major Disaster For Illinois (FEMA, 8/30)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Illinois to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms and flooding during the period of August 7-8, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Stephenson and Winnebago counties. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Tony Russell as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Russell said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more

counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are complete.

President Declares Major Disaster for Nebraska (FEMA, 8/29)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Nebraska to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding during the period of June 11-16, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding in the counties of Arthur, Chase, Dundy, Keith, McPherson, and Perkins counties. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Michael L. Parker as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Parker said damage surveys have been scheduled and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are completed.

Seven Minnesota Counties Eligible for Federal Public Assistance

An additional Minnesota county was made eligible Aug. 28 for federal Public Assistance funds, federal and state officials announced. This raises to seven the total number of counties that qualify for the full array of Public Assistance recovery funds in the aftermath of severe storms and flooding that began on Aug. 18, 2007, according to officials from Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) and FEMA. Dodge County is the most recent addition to the list of counties eligible for the assistance, which helps to repair damaged infrastructure and reimburse for emergency measures taken in the wake of the disaster. The other counties eligible for Public Assistance funds are Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Steele, Wabasha and Winona; on Aug. 28, they became eligible for the full range of Public Assistance, whereas before they had been approved only for emergency protective measures.

More rain soaks Wisconsin, prompts evacuation; lightning kills 1 (AP, 8/28)

Another round of thunderstorms brought more rain and a flash-flood warning to an already deluged southwestern Wisconsin on Monday, forcing residents below four dams to evacuate. Strong wind knocked out power to parts of Vilas and Oneida counties, and the National Weather Service briefly issued a flash flood warning for Vernon County as up to 3.5 inches of rain drenched the area. Elsewhere, cleanup and recovery were under way in parts of the Great Lakes region hit hard by last week's storms. President Bush declared north-central Ohio a disaster area, clearing the way for residents of the heavily flooded region to apply for grants for temporary housing and home repairs. Storms and flooding were blamed for at least 18 deaths across the upper Midwest. In Wisconsin, Bush had declared Vernon and four other counties federal disaster areas after last week's flooding forced people out of their homes.

Storm cleanup begins in soggy Midwest (AP, 8/28)

Ohio residents removed piles of waterlogged carpet, couches and upended refrigerators from their homes Sunday as they began the cleanup from recent flooding that Gov. Ted Strickland called "devastating." Strickland and FEMA officials surveyed damage in the heavily flooded northwest Ohio village of Ottawa, where he walked through the muddy streets. "It's difficult to exaggerate or embellish upon what's happened here. It's absolutely devastating," Strickland said in a telephone interview. The governor wants the federal government to declare a major disaster in the parts of north-central Ohio inundated by the past week's powerful storms and record floods that were blamed for at least 18 deaths in the Midwest. Meanwhile, the remnants of what was once Hurricane Dean soaked Southern California on Sunday afternoon, with as much as three inches of rain falling on the deserts of southwest San Diego County. Motorists were stranded in flooded washes alongside a road in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and lightning-struck power lines left 14,300 customers without power for almost five hours, a spokeswoman for San Diego Gas & Electric said. About 1,800 remained without power Sunday afternoon.

MN Towns Cleaning Up (Disaster News Network, 8/28)

Community leaders were scheduled to meet Thursday in two southeastern Minnesota towns to discuss the long-term recovery from last week's devastating floods. Disaster responders said the meetings in Winona and Rochester will allow for information to be shared. "We're calling together community leaders, nonprofits, churches and others in order to give them a sense of what long-term recovery is," said the Rev. Heather E. Klason, disaster response and training coordinator for the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Klason said for now, though, immediate response to and cleanup from the flooding was still the focus. Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties received federal disaster declarations Aug. 23, allowing residents to apply for assistance. The state's preliminary damage estimates said flooding destroyed 267 homes and severely damaged another 197 in Fillmore County. In Winona County, flooding destroyed 32 homes and severely damaged 244.

President Declares Major Disaster for Ohio

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Ohio to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes beginning on August 20, 2007, and continuing. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Putnam, Richland, and Wyandot counties. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Jesse Munoz as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Munoz said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are complete.

Gov. declares Northern Illinois U. a disaster area (Daily Chronicle, 8/27)

Ill. Gov. Rod Blagojevich declared DeKalb County a disaster area Sunday, due to flooding and water damage around the area. At a press conference in Lee County Friday, Blagojevich declared Cook, Kane, Lake, and McHenry counties disaster areas. DuPage County was also declared a disaster area over the weekend. DeKalb County's declaration came two days later than other surrounding counties that were declared disaster areas. Patti Thompson, communications manager of Illinois Emergency Management Agency, said DeKalb County was more affected overnight on Thursday, whereas other counties have dealt with severe weather and flooding for several days. "They've been struggling here for a few days now," Thompson said, referring to Kane, Cook, Lake, and McHenry counties. Counties usually declare themselves in a state of emergency first, prior to the state interjecting itself. "We go in and take a look, assess the area," Thompson said. "We see what we can do to provide assistance."

PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS

LLIS.GOV Site Promotes National Preparedness Month

September is the fourth annual National Preparedness Month, focused on back-to-school planning, business preparedness, multicultural preparedness, and home and family preparedness. The Lessons Learned Information Sharing website has created a National Preparedness Month resource page to share information about these issues. Many topic-specific resource pages on the site also feature special sections highlighting information related to National Preparedness Month, planning, or community preparedness. To access the National Preparedness Month page, log onto LLIS.gov and click on National Preparedness Month under Featured Topics.

Picture boards bridge language gap in health emergencies (Associated Press, 9/2)

With more ill and injured people unable to speak English, hospitals, clinics and rescue squads are turning to picture boards to bridge the communication gap with easily understood images. The large, double-sided panels let patients point to icons showing their problem such as pain, a burn, breathing trouble or a fall as well as the part of the body that is affected. They also can point to their native language in a list so an appropriate interpreter can be located. "They ought to be in every ambulance, in every hospital, in every clinic," said Dr. Fred M. Jacobs, head of New Jersey's health department. "Communication barriers lead to adverse impacts on (care) quality, misunderstandings and even medical errors." His department is partnering with the state's hospital association to distribute thousands of the boards to all New Jersey hospitals, rescue squads and public health clinics. Use of the panels is likely to spread under a new U.S. Department of Health and Human Services program aimed at helping hospitals to determine their patients' communication needs and to find tools to meet those needs. At least nine state hospital associations have signed on: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah and Washington.

Colorado Group Urges Preparedness (Pueblo Chieftan, 9/1)

A statewide group aimed at bringing awareness of being prepared for disasters is launching a unique campaign organizers hope will reach residents from border to border. Beginning today, 100 B. Ready dolls will be making their way throughout the state encouraging people to prepare for disasters and then passing that message along to their friends and neighbors. The campaign, sponsored by ReadyColorado, is being held in conjunction with National Preparedness Month. ReadyColorado is a public awareness campaign supported by public and private individuals who are concerned with homeland security and all-hazards preparedness. "The idea is that each time B. Ready is passed to a person, we're hoping they'll add something to their preparedness kit," said Deanna Erstad of ReadyColorado. "If they don't have a kit, we're hoping that they will get one started. "This is a grassroots effort to spread awareness for people to have kits ready in the event of disaster." Preparedness kits are composed of essential items that might be needed in any type of disaster. They include such items as water, non-perishable food items, flashlights and batteries, medication, tools and personal items. The B. Ready, Pass it On campaign is being kicked off in cities and towns this week throughout the state as a way to encourage residents to prepare for disasters. On Thursday, campaign organizers visited the Colorado State Fair and gave two B. Ready dolls to two Future Farmers of America officers, who plan to distribute them at a statewide FFA conference later this month.

1,700+ Organizations Participate in National Preparedness Month (DHS, 8/31)

"Too many individuals remain in a state of denial when it comes to personal preparedness," said DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. "Able-bodied Americans need to be prepared to take care of themselves and their families after an emergency, so that first responders can focus on those who need assistance most. With the help of our coalition members, we encourage Americans to get an emergency supply kit, make a family communications plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that may affect them." During September, Coalition Members will share preparedness information with their members, customers, employees, and communities. For the first time, National Preparedness Month is focusing on different areas of emergency preparedness, including:

- September 1-8: Back to School (Ready Kids)
- September 9-15: Business Preparedness (Ready Business)
- September 16-22: Multicultural Preparedness (Listo)
- September 23-30: Home and Family Preparedness, including pets, older Americans and individuals with disabilities and special needs (Ready America)

The purpose of National Preparedness Month is to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies. Although significant progress has been made, there is still a long way to go to ensure that all Americans are prepared. A national survey conducted by The Advertising Council on behalf of Homeland Security in July found that 66 percent of Americans believe it is "very important" for individuals to prepare and 54 percent report having taken some steps to prepare. The study also found progress on emergency preparedness among specific subgroups, including: Hispanic Americans; men, particularly fathers; and employers.

Free course offers emergency-preparedness training (AR Democrat Gazette, 8/30)

Emergency responders would be stretched to the limit, schools and nonessential

businesses would close, and drug and vaccine supplies would quickly be depleted if the avian influenza virus evolved into a pandemic, Rick Johnson of the Arkansas Department of Health told participants in an emergency preparedness course in Bella Vista on Tuesday. "Who are the first ones we need to look after? Ourselves and our families," said Johnson, the department's Washington County unit administrator. The six-hour course is one of three free courses taught in cities nationwide by Northwest Arkansas Community College's Institute for Corporate and Public Safety. The others are on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction awareness in the workplace, and business continuity planning. Crisis scenarios range from a tornado to a terrorist attack. "The institute's primary purpose is making sure that a community is ready when a crisis occurs, and a crisis will come - that's inevitable," said institute Director Ricky Tompkins. "We must be prepared." Since it was founded in 2004, the institute has trained people from 28 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Mariana Islands and the United Kingdom, Tompkins said. Instructors have taught courses in Denver, San Antonio and Parma, Ohio. About 1,200 emergency responders have trained since January, including about 500 online.

Child-care providers get NOAA radios (MS Sun Herald, 8/30)

Some Jackson County youngsters are now safer, thanks to free NOAA weather radios. Chevron and the Jackson County Board of Supervisors have begun giving away weather radios to child-care providers at a kickoff ceremony for the program Wednesday at First Baptist Church Preschool Learning Center in Pascagoula. "Severe weather can pop up so fast along the Coast," said Jackson County Emergency Manager Butch Loper. "These radios will help ensure our local child-care centers, or any home of business for that matter, know about any threats as soon as possible." Loper developed the weather radio giveaway program after talking to child-care centers about severe-weather alerts in the county. More than 70 child-care providers will receive radios. "Today Chevron is taking another step in supporting the young people in this county," said Chevron spokesman Steve Renfroe.

Consumers Prefer Canned Food for Emergency Food Supply (US Newswire, 8/30)

When asked what form they would prefer for their emergency food supply in the event of a natural disaster, 55 percent of consumers favor canned food, over dry goods, fresh and frozen options. The survey, conducted by the global research firm Harris Interactive, indicates that consumers recognize the important role that canned foods play in being prepared for an event such as a hurricane or tornado. It was conducted in advance of September, which the government has dubbed National Preparedness Month. Canned goods provide the most tamper-resistant food packaging option available today, protecting food from contamination. Canned foods retain quality and nutrition for two years beyond the date of purchase. Recent research confirms that the food that comes out of a steel can is nutritionally similar to its fresh and frozen counterparts by the time it is consumed," said Rich Tavoletti, executive director of the Canned Food Alliance (CFA), a partnership of steel producers, can manufacturers and food processors formed to educate consumers on the nutritional and convenience benefits of canned food. Canned foods provide consumers with a nutritious, safe food option throughout the year, even during an emergency situation, such as a natural disaster.

Essential pantry item chart: <http://www.steel.org/containers/EmergencyPantryChart.pdf>

Congress eyes expanding flood insurance coverage (FL Times Union, 8/27)

A battle between Katrina victims and insurance companies has moved to the halls of Congress, setting off a tussle over the future of the nation's flood insurance program. The roots lie in disputes between those who returned to devastated homes in the Gulf Coast region and the private companies that offered them insurance against storm damage. In many cases, according to critics, those companies said there was no way to decide which damage was caused by flooding and which was caused by wind. As a result, the companies allegedly tried to pawn off the damages onto the government-run flood insurance program unless homeowners could prove the damage was caused by wind. "If your house is destroyed and spread all over town, it's pretty damn hard to prove what the wind did and what flooding did," said Brian Martin, policy director for U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss. Taylor has sponsored a bill that would allow the federal program to also offer "multiple peril" insurance providing for both wind and flood damage. But industry spokesmen and some advocacy groups say that change would be a disaster of its own. "Our concern is essentially that it's an unnecessary and unprecedented expansion of a federal program," said Clifton Brown, a spokesman for the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America. Both sides say the outcome of the battle over the legislation could affect coastal property owners from New England to Texas.

GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS

Uprooted Katrina evacuees adjust to 'Burgh life (Pittsburgh Tribune Review, 9/1)

The day before Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast two years ago, Laurel Turner and her family fled their New Orleans home, taking three sets of clothes to stay with relatives in Houston. "I wasn't going to go," Turner said. But upon realizing how formidable the storm had become, she changed her mind. "We're just glad we came out alive." After a week in Texas, the family drove to Turner's brother's house in East Pittsburgh. Turner, 49, and her daughter, her husband and their two children now live in Findlay and are here to stay. As many as 9,000 Katrina evacuees wound up in Pennsylvania after the New Orleans levees gave way on Aug. 29, 2005, immersing 80 percent of the city. Today, about 85 Katrina-displaced families in Allegheny County, and at least 100 in surrounding counties, are still receiving some assistance from area social agencies. Some have settled in permanently, but others miss home and say they would go back to the Gulf Coast if they could.

Katrina After Neglect (Chattanooga Times Free Press, 9/1)

Two years ago, Americans watched in horror as a great city drowned, and wondered what had happened to their country. Where was FEMA? Where was the National Guard? Why wasn't the government of the world's richest, most powerful nation coming to the aid of its own citizens? What we mostly saw on TV was the nightmarish scene at the Superdome, but things were even worse at the New Orleans convention center, where thousands were stranded without food or water. The levees were breached Monday morning -- but as late as Thursday evening, The Washington Post reported, the convention center "still had no visible government presence," while "corpses lay out in

the open among wailing babies and other refugees." Meanwhile, federal officials were oblivious. "We are extremely pleased with the response that every element of the federal government, all of our federal partners, have made to this terrible tragedy," declared DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. When asked the next day about the situation at the convention center, he dismissed the reports as "a rumor" or "someone's anecdotal version." Today, much of the Gulf Coast remains in ruins. Less than half of the federal money for rebuilding -- as opposed to emergency relief -- has actually been spent, in part because the Bush administration refused to waive the requirement that local governments put up matching funds for recovery projects: An impossible burden for communities whose tax bases have literally been washed away.

Katrina Effort Slow and Inadequate (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 8/31)

Katrina may not have been the nation's deadliest hurricane - that tragic distinction belongs to the Galveston hurricane of 1900 - but is there any doubt that the failure of government at all levels before, during and since Katrina made landfall two years ago this week has been of unmitigated proportions? Consider these facts garnered from news accounts and recent studies released by the Institute for Southern Studies and the Children's Defense Fund: The population of New Orleans is still about 181,000 lower than before Katrina hit; about 60,000 families still live in FEMA trailers; the city's justice system is in disarray and its murder rate is abominable; and too many school-age children are not back in school. While government has provided some relief and rebuilt some of the critical infrastructure, the process has been slow and inadequate. According to the institute, out of the \$116 billion in federal funds allocated, less than 30% has gone toward long-term rebuilding and less than half of that 30% has been spent. Furthermore, although the Army Corps of Engineers has fixed some of the levee system that failed to protect New Orleans two years ago, the Corps has yet to close the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet canal that helped cause much of the flooding, and there are still whole neighborhoods without adequate flood control. New Orleans could not withstand a hurricane like Katrina any better today than it could two years ago. Not all the news is bad: Volunteer organizations, many of them church-based, and local citizens have worked hard to restore parts of the city, and, as previously noted, government has done some good work.

Official list of Katrina victims still untabulated (Newhouse News Service, 8/30)

Of all the undone tasks that linger two years after Hurricane Katrina, one stands out as a symbol of the unique chaos wrought by the flood: figuring out who died. Lists of names, the simplest of tributes, mark memorials nationwide. The 58,195 names of Vietnam War casualties are etched into polished black granite in the nation's capital; the 168 names of the Oklahoma City bombing victims are remembered at a memorial and museum; and the 2,974 people who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks will be listed on a planned Lower Manhattan tribute. In contrast, the names of the people Katrina killed still lie scattered in the files of multiple government agencies. No agency has yet produced a complete list, and none is trying, leaving a gaping hole in the record of a defining event in national history. The lack of an official list owes to a host of reasons, including the difficulty and subjectivity of the task itself, given that many people died from Katrina-related causes long after the floodwaters subsided. Though several local coroners released

lists of who died in their parishes, Orleans Parish Coroner Frank Minyard, who has jurisdiction over the vast majority of deaths, has raised concerns over possible violations of family privacy. Louisiana health officials initially compiled a partial list but never embraced the role and complain of a lack of federal support.

Katrina survivors in Bay Area share anger, despair (San Jose Mercury News, 8/30)
Braving Wednesday afternoon's 91-degree heat, Sandra Wilson marched from Municipal Stadium to the San Jose State University campus with a letter she received two weeks ago gripped tightly in her hand. Though the letter is four sentences long, it captures the never-ending struggle she's endured since Hurricane Katrina changed her world forever on Aug. 29, 2005. Written in government-ese, the letter ends starkly with: "FEMA is unable to extend you any further assistance." "It's not over for us" "It's been a nightmare," Wilson said, who hasn't received financial assistance since the second week after Katrina hit her New Orleans neighborhood: a \$360 voucher from the Red Cross and \$2,000 from FEMA. "The storm, it's not over for us." Wilson and three other Katrina survivors who now live in the Bay Area joined SJSU students in a march that commemorated the 1,800 lives lost to the wrath of Hurricane Katrina two years ago. Wilson, a California State University-Stanislaus graduate who worked as a library associate for the city of New Orleans and rubbed elbows with President Johnson during the 1965 Hurricane Betsy relief effort in New Orleans, lost everything she worked 35 years for when the levees broke.

Milwaukee helps Katrina victims find housing (St. Paul Pioneer Press, 8/30)
The city of Milwaukee is assisting 52 Katrina evacuees two years after the hurricane hit the Gulf Coast, and more are expected to seek help, according to the Milwaukee Housing Authority's associate director. Steve Falek said 23 people are living in public housing developments and 29 are being helped through the city's rent assistance program. FEMA e-mailed Falek recently about families elsewhere who now want to relocate to Milwaukee. Rebuilding in many devastated areas has moved so slowly that families have not been able to return, Falek said. Vanessa Key, chief executive of New Concept Self Development Center, said the agency had been assisting at least 90 families, but it stopped providing services to Katrina evacuees Monday when two grants - from Katrina Aid Today and the United Methodist Committee on Relief - ended.

Thousands of Katrina victims still pay no rent (AR Democrat Gazette, 8/29)
Two years after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, many refugees have yet to regain their financial independence. FEMA is still paying rent for some 29,000 families displaced by Katrina or Hurricane Rita. Eight hundred of them live in Arkansas. An additional 11,400 families, including 120 in Arkansas, are living rent-free with special vouchers that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued to people who lived in subsidized housing before Katrina and Rita. Like FEMA's assistance, a HUD voucher pays the full cost of rent in a private house or apartment. Unel Mitchell, who lives in a one-bedroom apartment off Rodney Parham Road in Little Rock, says he was unable to find work until a week and a half ago. He wouldn't be able to make it without FEMA's help, he said.

1000's of Evacuees still call AL home (Birmingham News, 8/29)

According to FEMA records, 13,775 evacuee households still listed an Alabama mailing address as of Aug. 22. That's down from the 27,059 evacuee households registered with FEMA who listed Alabama mailing addresses in October 2005. Danon Lucas, public affairs specialist for Alabama's Department of Homeland Security/ FEMA Alabama Transitional Recovery Office, said some people have been able to move back to the Gulf Coast.

Has New Orleans Bounced Back? (Time, 8/29)

Two years have elapsed since Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters overtopped levees and collapsed floodwalls designed to protect New Orleans, destroying homes and lives and shattering the city's economy. Many more years will likely pass before the Crescent city regains its footing, if it ever does. Some things will be changed forever. One-third of the city's pre-Katrina population of 450,000 is still living somewhere else, many never to return; according to a new Brookings Institute report, the unemployment rate in Orleans Parish is 5.1%, up from 4.5% at the one-year anniversary mark. Corporations that were hard to attract and retain before the storm may prove even more reluctant to locate in a city so vulnerable to nature's wrath. But there are some positive signs in New Orleans' halting economic recovery, particularly in the industries that largely sustained it prior to the storm. And despite lingering challenges, many here are pinning their hopes on them.

Volunteers Key to Gulf Coast Recovery (Disaster News Network, 8/29)

Residents throughout the Gulf Coast paused Wednesday to observe the two-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina while still facing the grim reality of a recovery effort that is going to drag on for years. "At this point, you've got a lot of people that are depressed and wondering if they're ever going to get back to where they were before," said Robert Sharp, executive director for United Methodist Disaster Response in Mississippi. Despite billions of dollars in government aid, billions more in private donations and a massive army of more than 1 million volunteers, much of the Gulf Coast still is ailing severely two years after Katrina. Throughout the region this week, there were events scheduled to mark the two-year anniversary, including interfaith and church services, community forums and an unusual photo exhibition, with images documenting the hurricane, its aftermath and life on the Gulf Coast over the last two years projected on the levee wall in the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans.

LA nonprofit awarding \$7M in housing help for victims (N.O. City Business, 8/28)

A Baton Rouge nonprofit on Wednesday is expected to announce a plan to award more than \$7 million to nonprofits to assist hurricane victims. Louisiana Family Recovery Corps said it wants Louisiana nonprofits to submit proposals to disburse the funds, which homeowners can use to buy appliances or furniture, for rent payments or utility deposits. Homeowners will be able to apply for the funding beginning in early October. Recovery Corps CEO Raymond Jetson said about \$5 million will be used for disaster-affected families in need of one-time household establishment assistance. An additional \$2.3 million will go toward household establishment assistance for those who are still living in FEMA trailers but who want to move into other housing in Louisiana, he said. Recovery Corps will also invest about \$1 million in its NOLA Bound Call Center to assist

displaced hurricane victims who are outside Louisiana but who want to come back to live and work.

FEMA grants help finance trip home (New Orleans Times Picayune, 8/28)

FEMA on Monday launched its long-promised program to pay return costs for thousands of Louisianians displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The maximum \$4,000 grant comes with some restrictions, but the program will finance both reimbursements and advances for those who cannot afford to get themselves back to the areas they called home before the 2005 storms. "This is a great way to get people back to Louisiana," said FEMA spokeswoman Diane Perry. The one-time benefit can cover moving expenses incurred between Feb. 1, 2006 and Feb. 29, 2008. To be eligible for the assistance, a household must have been displaced more than 50 miles from its original residence and have qualified already for the federal Individuals and Households Program. That program's \$26,200 cap will be enforced in figuring the travel grants, so eligible households that have received more than \$22,200 will see their travel grants reduced to keep their overall receipts beneath the limit.

New Orleans citywide recovery plan enacted by year's end (N.O. Citybusiness, 8/27)

The Citywide Strategic Recovery and Redevelopment Plan, formulated by Office of Recovery Management Director Ed Blakely, is shored up by \$449 million and will be in full effect by the end of the year. When Blakely announced 17 targeted recovery zones March 29, he promised to at least start one project in each zone by Sept. 1. The ORM will not meet its self-set deadline but the plan is still on track, said ORM Deputy Director Jessie Smallwood. "Forty percent of the target areas are on track for something to happen Sept. 1," Smallwood said. "Maybe four or five projects will be started by Sept. 1. The rest will be started shortly thereafter through the end of the year." Neighborhood groups and associations in the 17 zones still are deliberating project priorities, causing the delay, she said. Smallwood would not identify the neighborhoods still trying to decide the first project because it would "seem like they're behind and they're not."