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**HALF MILLION DOLLAR GRANT TO LOCAL RED CROSS
- \$515,000 FROM IOWA WEST FOR FLOOD RECOVERY -**

(Council Bluffs, IA) The Iowa West Foundation, which is headquartered in Council Bluffs, today announced a half million dollars in funding to the Red Cross for flood recovery assistance in southwest Iowa and eastern Nebraska. The \$515,000 grant went to the Red Cross Loess Hills Chapter in Council Bluffs to help meet the needs of individuals and families negatively impacted by the Missouri River flooding.

“One of Iowa West’s top focus areas in our mission is to help meet human and social needs,” said Jerry Mathiasen, Senior Vice President of the Iowa West Foundation, “and disaster recovery in the human services area is not easy.” He added, “to be in the forefront of supporting flood recovery for families through the Red Cross and other non-profits is vitally important.” “We understand there is significant physical damage out there,” Mathiasen explained, “but charities like the Red Cross need support to meet the critical needs of our fellow neighbors.”

“We really appreciate the hard work and dedicated service of the National Guard and state, county, and city public employees in being on top of this crisis,” said Chuck Smith, Chair of the Iowa West Foundation Board of Directors, “yet, as a philanthropic institution, the foundation knows well the many challenges which non-profit agencies face in meeting human needs so we wanted to come forward early in the recovery.”

The grant is to help the Red Cross as the point organization in the human services efforts dealing with flood recovery. In summary, the grant includes:

- \$265,000 for critical client services such as interim housing, gas cards, bus tickets, casework for individuals and families, information - referral services, mental health assistance, mortgage - rental costs, hot water heaters, sump-pumps, dehumidifiers, and utility assistance;
- \$150,000 for clean-up kits in Pottawattamie County and seven other Iowa and Nebraska counties affected by the flooding and storms (a kit has a broom, mop, pail, scrub brush, disinfectant, bleach, gloves, mask, trash bags, cooler, sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.);
- \$50,000 as seed money to establish a COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster), which is an important mechanism used across the country for large recovery efforts, most recently used in Iowa in 2008 for the eastern Iowa flood, and it will include dozens of local human service agencies;
- \$30,000 to continue the Red Cross support and cooperative programs of three key human service outreach programs – to replenish the canteen supplies of the Salvation Army, to sustain and improve the United Way of the Midlands 2-1-1 call center operation for access to southwest Iowans, and to meet the needs of the city’s volunteer center at First Christian Church;
- \$20,000 for replenishing the Red Cross Loess Hills Chapter supply of the water, ice, snacks, and meals that were provided to all the sandbagging volunteers and National Guard soldiers, and – because of the time consuming in-kind fundraising of locating and transporting donated ice to them – the chapter also believes the purchase of an ice machine with part of this amount would be a real asset.

“The Red Cross hopes to be catalytic in our approach in this recovery effort by working with many groups in the entire region,” said Jill Orton, Executive Director of the Red Cross Loess

Hills Chapter. “This tremendous funding not only signals community support, but also is a real boost of confidence to area human service volunteers and staff,” she stated.

The clean-up kits will be immediately distributed to victims in these counties: Pottawattamie, Fremont, Harrison, and Mills in Iowa; and Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington in Nebraska. Call the Red Cross at 712-322-4017 to request a kit.

Mathiasen and Orton both cited the Pottawattamie County Foundation (PCCF) as another key funding source for flooding victims, and encouraged people to make contributions to PCCF. “As a community foundation, PCCF can accept donations from the public and it has the flexibility to give out disaster relief grants to victims,” explained Mathiasen. “It’s an effective tool for people to give back to the community.”

Orton said that, the Red Cross and the COAD will be an important mechanism for support “now and in the future.”

For more information about flood relief go to www.loesshills.redcross.org or call 712-322-4017.

For more information on donating to PCCF or for grant information, call 712-256-7007 or visit www.ourpccf.org.

For more information on the Iowa West Foundation visit www.iowawestfoundation.org.

Funding for the Foundation’s grants comes from investment earnings and the Iowa West Racing Association (IWRA), which receives contracted fees from casino operators – Ameristar and Harrah’s. IWRA distributes funds to the Foundation, which is an independent 501 (c) (3) organization that makes grants in southwest Iowa and eastern Nebraska.

The Iowa West Foundation has provided grants totaling \$270 million since it began grant making in 1996.

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