

Whitfield County residents need to know how to prepare for disaster

Dalton, GA -- September 16, 2010 – Chemical spills and accidental releases of other hazardous materials are high on the list of top potential disasters in Whitfield County, but also, high winds, flooding, drought, earthquakes and pandemic influenza are potential hazards in this area. The Whitfield County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) leads communitywide preparation for these possible dangers by coordinating plans among its partnership, which includes local representatives from emergency response agencies, medical associations, government, public health, law enforcement, non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations and businesses.

Regardless of whether the hazard is manmade or natural, it is not only imperative that the community be prepared but that each individual be prepared, as well.

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month, and as the month draws to an end, it should be the beginning for Whitfield County residents to take concrete actions to help themselves, their neighbors and their community so they will be ready when disaster strikes.

According to Claude Craig, Director of Whitfield County Emergency Management and Chairman of the LEPC, following four simple steps now can make you and your family safer when emergencies occur:

- **Get or make a disaster kit**
- **Make a family emergency plan**
- **Be informed**
- **Get involved**

Emergencies occur without warning; and while local responders will be on the scene after a disaster, they may not be able to reach everyone who needs help right away.

“Our recommendation is that emergency kits should have enough basic supplies for you and your family to survive for two weeks,” Craig said.

Disaster kits should include food, water, flashlights, batteries, medications, a NOAA weather radio, personal hygiene items, baby supplies such as formula and diapers, garbage bags with ties, pet food, matches, a first aid kit and sleeping bags. A complete list is available at www.ready.gov.

Make sure you prepare *with your family* a written **family emergency plan** and practice that plan with them to ensure that they know it well.

Being informed during a disaster includes staying tuned in to the news on a battery-powered radio and having a weather radio that will alert you to impending storms.

You can **get involved** in community preparedness through volunteer opportunities that are available through the Northwest Georgia American Red Cross and the Whitfield County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). To learn more about volunteering, log onto www.whitfieldcountyga.com/LEPC/indx.htm.