

September is national preparedness month!

In a recent survey conducted by the American Red Cross, the Midwest had the lowest average scores for preparedness in eight of 12 key measures.

The survey showed only 20% of people living in the Midwest has a disaster kit. So to encourage Americans to prepare for the unexpected, whether it's a winter storm, tornado or a heart attack, the Thomas County American Red Cross is participating in National Preparedness Month.

Throughout September, our local chapter has been teaching citizens how to be Red Cross ready in four easy steps: Get a kit; Make a plan; Be informed; and Get involved.

Activities at the local chapter include a pancake breakfast fundraiser that will be sponsored by the Boy Scouts at the Colby Community Building on Saturday, September 27 from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. and a First Aid and CPR class held in Colby September 9.

Get a Kit- This should include items for three days worth of supplies in an easy-to-carry evacuation kit. It should include items as water, non-perishable food, first aid kit, medications, flashlight, battery-operated radio, tools, clothing, sanitary supplies, money, pet supplies, maps, contact information, and any personal items for comfort.

Be sure to store your kit in sturdy yet easy-to-carry containers, and in an easily accessible location.

Make a plan- Planning ahead will help you have the best possible response to a disaster. Talk to your family about possible scenarios and assign responsibilities to each family member.

Plan a meeting place and a create a contact plan in case of disasters. Learn how to shut off your utilities and how to use a fire extinguisher.

Make sure every family mem-

ber knows your emergency plan. Practice your plan, and include your pets in your evacuation plan.

Be informed- Learn what types of disasters may occur at different times of the year and how you can help. Identify how local authorities will notify you during a disaster. Share what you have learned with your family, friends, and neighbors.

Get involved- Support your community. The American Red Cross depends on local caring volunteers in our community to

deliver disaster relief to victims at the times of need.

Take a class from Red Cross so you are prepared in case you come upon an emergency situation.

Make a lifesaving difference by giving blood. The ongoing need for blood is great, as it has a short shelf life. Every two seconds someone needs a blood transfusion: cancer patients, accident victims, premature babies, and the list goes on and on. One simple donation can save as many as three lives!

Or simply make a tax-deductible monetary donation to your local chapter.

"Experience tells us that we respond better and recover quicker to disasters when we're prepared," said Sherry White, Executive Director for the Thomas County branch office of the American Red Cross. "We should all take time and recognize National Preparedness Month to make our community safer for all of us.

"Whether you can give of your time, talent, or financial gift, we

need your continued support in all three manners in order to benefit the citizens right here in all seven counties of our jurisdiction: Cheyenne, Rawlins, Thomas, Sheridan, Wallace, Logan, and Gove."

For more information, including downloadable resources regarding how individuals and families can prepare for disasters, visit www.redcross.org/BeRedCrossReady or contact Thomas County American Red Cross.

Kansas delegation split over federal bailout plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — It didn't take long Thursday for Kansas Rep. Todd Tiahrt to come out against the multibillion-dollar Wall Street bailout agreement reached by congressional leaders.

The Wichita-area Republican said his office has received nearly 500 calls this week from outraged voters opposed to the idea of a rescue package to help shaky financial houses.

"Based on what I know today, I'm a 'no'," Tiahrt said. "We've got to move away from this model of throwing money at the problem."

Under the \$700 billion accord, the government would buy the mortgage-based assets of financial institutions in an effort to keep them from going under and setting off a domino effect that could wipe out retirement savings, harm businesses and lead to rising unemployment.

The plan would initially give the Treasury secretary \$250 billion, with an additional \$100 billion if he certified it was needed. An additional \$350 billion could be blocked by a congressional vote, under language giving lawmakers greater control of the rescue.

President Bush has pressured lawmakers to approve the bailout, warning that the country could head toward a painful recession unless the current credit crisis is addressed.

But the idea of rewarding wealthy companies with what some called a "blank check" for making bad investments has outraged constituents who want more protection for taxpayers.

Tiahrt said the plan doesn't seem to address the underlying problems of how mortgages are sold and tracked. He said similar attempts to bail out other industries have not met with long-term success, and he suggested more effort should be made to bring in the private sector to take the burden off the federal government.

Republican Rep. Jerry Moran, who represents western Kansas, said he was still waiting to see details of the bailout.

"I want to take every step to avoid folks from having to suffer the consequences of Wall Street problems," Moran said. "I am not interested in shifting the liabilities from these big corporations to the taxpayer or in adding to the debt our children will be asked to pay."

Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., was holding off from commenting until he could get more details on the deal. But Democrat Jim Slattery, who is running against Roberts, said he is "outraged that hard-working Kansas taxpayers are being asked to clean up the mess made by greedy Wall Street money changers, incompetent regulators and members of Congress from both political parties."

Slattery said he opposes any bailout that unfairly compensates CEOs. He also said the plan should help ordinary Kansans at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure and include a stiffer regulations to oversee the system.

Democratic Rep. Nancy Boyda said any action to help the financial markets must protect taxpayers.



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