



**American
Red Cross**
of Georgia

Disaster Update

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Georgia's Red Cross Responds to Deadly Tornadoes



American Red Cross relief efforts continue this week in tornado-ravaged Georgia, where heart-broken families mourn the loss of loved ones and nearly 1,100 homes have been heavily damaged or destroyed.

Well before the tornadoes hit on April 27, Red Cross volunteers in communities across Georgia prepared to respond. Local Disaster Action Teams were among the first to shelter, feed, and comfort their devastated neighbors in the aftermath of the storms.

In the weeks and months ahead, the Red Cross will be there to help disaster-stricken families get back on their feet, and support struggling communities in their recovery. The needs of those devastated by the storms are immense, but because of the support of our donors, the Red Cross has the capacity to respond to each and every disaster, providing shelter, meals, supplies, and emotional support.

Red Cross Response to Date:

- **200 Red Cross volunteers** and staff in hard-hit areas of the state are working with community partners to provide shelter, meals, health and mental health services, clean-up supplies and other recovery resources.
- **162,218 meals have been served and 427 comfort kits distributed.** Emergency response vehicles were mobilized to provide mobile feeding and clean-up supply distribution.
- **445 people have been provided shelter.** Shelters remain open in the following locations at Lakeview Fort Oglethorpe High School in Catoosa County, Manchester High School in Meriwether County, and Clayton Baptist Church in Rabun County. Red Cross shelters were opened in Catoosa, Dade, Floyd, Meriwether, Morgan, Pickens, Rabun, and Spalding counties on the night of the storms to provide a safe haven and meals for storm survivors.
- Red Cross nurses and mental health counselors are providing health and mental health services for those who face the daunting task of rebuilding.
- Red Cross damage assessment teams are reporting **572 homes in Georgia were destroyed and 526 suffered major damage.** Disaster assessment remains to be completed in Walker and Rabun counties.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all the families of those who lost their lives to these terrible storms,” said Suzanne Detlefs, Board Chair for the Georgia Red Cross. “Red Cross disaster teams are working tirelessly to shelter and feed thousands of people affected by the disaster, and we will continue to be there for them until their emergency needs are met.”

Red Cross-Georgia Tornado Call Center

Anyone who needs information on Red Cross tornado relief services in Georgia is urged to call the Red Cross-Georgia Tornado Call Center, a toll-free number, at **1-800-RED CROSS** (1-800-733-2767) and follow the prompts for disaster relief in Georgia.

The call center, **open daily from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.**, is a resource for families with questions about what types of services the Red Cross is providing to disaster survivors and how to access them in local communities. Volunteers can also provide tips and recovery resources, community referrals, and help with family reunification through the Red Cross Safe and Well website. The Safe and Well website provides a way to let loved ones know you are safe and to find information about people in the affected areas. Callers can register themselves as Safe and Well at www.redcross.org.

Five More Counties Designated for Federal Assistance

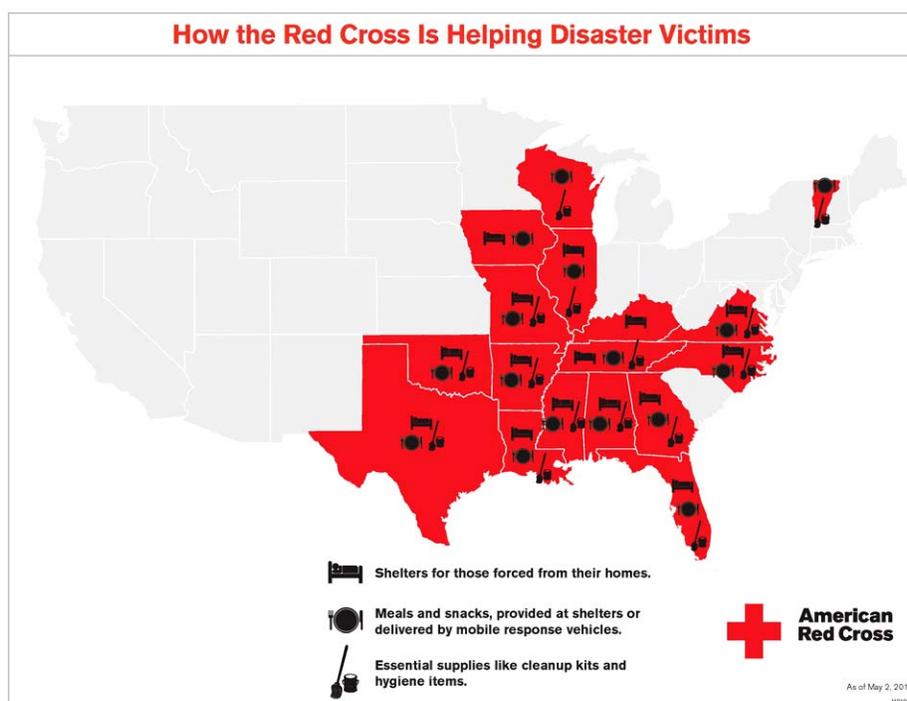
Five more counties have been designated for disaster assistance for individuals, families, and businesses as part of Georgia's federal disaster declaration for the recent storms and tornadoes. The latest counties are Cherokee, Habersham, Newton, Upson, and White, bringing the total number approved for assistance to individuals to 25. Counties previously designated for individual assistance are Bartow, Catoosa, Coweta, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Greene, Harris, Heard, Lamar, Lumpkin, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Spalding, Troup, and Walker.

Affected survivors and business owners in these counties may apply for assistance by calling FEMA's toll-free registration number, **800-621-FEMA (3362)**. An online application may be completed at www.DisasterAssistance.gov. Individual assistance for homeowners and renters can include grants to help pay for rental housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses not met by insurance or other assistance programs.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) are now open in Catoosa, Dade, Floyd, and Spalding counties. Visit www.fema.gov for exact locations.

Red Cross Helping People All Across the Country

Since March 31, the Red Cross has responded to 20 large disasters across the southeast, helping people devastated by tornadoes, floods, and wildfires. The Red Cross has opened more than 120 shelters, served more than 513,000 meals and snacks, and distributed more than 97,000 clean-up supplies.



Alabama was the hardest hit state:

- An estimated 7 -10,000 homes have been severely damaged or destroyed. Damage was centered in Birmingham and Tuscaloosa.
- The Red Cross is operating 16 shelters with 716 overnight stays.
- The Red Cross mobilized 40 emergency response vehicles to assist with feeding, relief supply distribution, and medical and mental health outreach throughout affected areas.
- A mobile kitchen was deployed that can serve up to 20,000 meals/day.
- Communication infrastructure has been severely damaged, but two Red Cross emergency communication response vehicles are assisting with communication needs

How You Can Help

Red Cross disaster assistance is free. The Red Cross depends on financial donations to help in times of disaster. Please consider making a donation today to help the thousands of people who have been affected by these disasters.

By Phone: Call 1-800-RED-CROSS

By Text: Text REDCROSS to 90999 and donate \$10

By Check: Mail to American Red Cross, P.O. Box 101508, Atlanta, GA 30392-1508

By Internet: Visit www.redcross.org

Your gift enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling, and other emergency assistance. On those rare occasions when donations exceed Red Cross expenses for a specific disaster, contributions are used to prepare for and serve victims of other disasters.