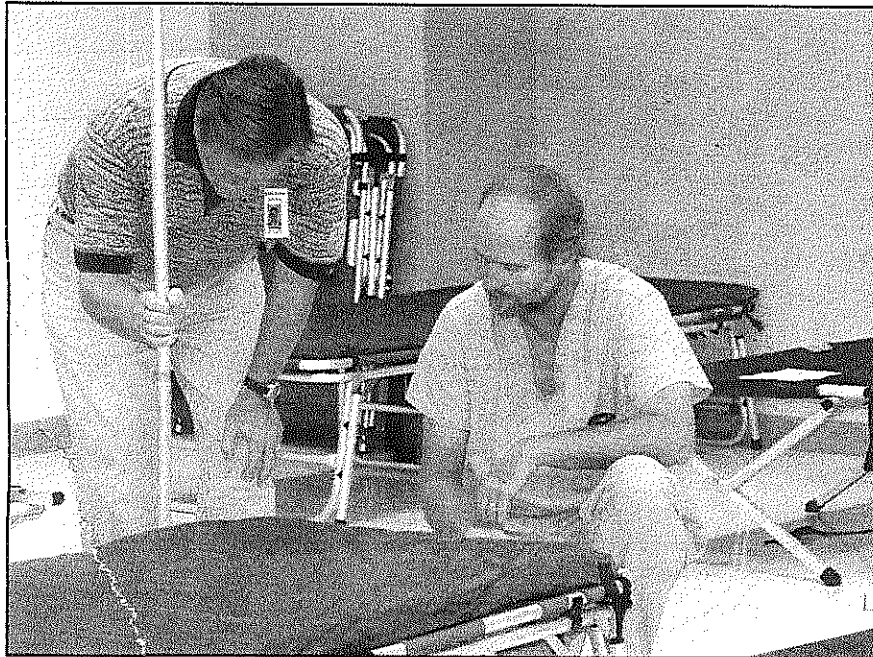


LOCAL NEWS

Shelter Opens Just Days After Trial Run



M.L. Davis from The Red Cross and Gerald Nottekemper from Singing River Hospital go through a dry run on August 26th. They set up all 60 beds to make sure there was enough room between beds for medical personnel.

Cherie Chesser

Hurley - August 30, 2008

Not even a week after The Red Cross went through a practice run of setting up the Special Needs Shelter at the community center, they were setting up for real in response to the threat posed by Hurricane Gustav.

The only special needs shelter in Jackson county is a joint effort between The American Red Cross, Jackson County Emergency Management and Singing River Hospital System. The shelter requires pre-registration and is only open to people with a medical condition requiring them to have electricity to survive. Each patient is required to bring one caregiver

The Red Cross purchased 60 special needs cots with grant money provided by The United Way, Singing River Electric Power Association and British Petroleum.

Paige Roberts, the executive director of the Southeast Mississippi Chapter of The Red Cross, said the East Central Community Center was chosen as the site for the shelter for numerous reasons. The center offers direct highway access and is a straight shot to both Providence and Singing River Hospitals. It's also in a location that is high and dry, and the building is new enough to meet the building codes required. Other family members can also stay just up the street at the shelter located at East Central High School. The shelter

has their own satellite system allowing them to stay in contact with the rest of the world if normal communication fails following a natural disaster. The community center has installed a 645 gallon generator capable of running for 72 hours. The generator will automatically kick on when the power goes out. In the past, the special needs shelter relied on generators supplied by Chevron.

Ms. Roberts also noted that shelters should be used as a last resort. Whenever possible, other arrangements should be made.

The Special Needs Shelter will need the support of our community. The community partners are as follows: Southern Delights Café, Rx Express Pharmacy, CVS Pharmacy, Hurley Farm and Feed (all agreed to provide services with consideration of cost) and The East Central Link (news support for volunteerism and shelter operations). Volunteer Partners include: Canaan Assembly of God, Temple Baptist Church, Big Point United Methodist, House of Praise, Harmony Baptist Church, Saint Ann Parish Center, First Pentecostal Church of Hurley, Hurley Church of Christ, Magnolia Springs Assembly of God, Hurley Methodist Church, East Central Medical Center, East Central Fire Department, Jackson County Sheriff's Department, and senior citizens group The Antique Angels.

For information about how you can help, or to find out if you or a loved one qualifies to register for the special needs shelter, contact the Southeast Mississippi Chapter of The American Red Cross at (228) 762-2455.

What to bring to a shelter...

Water: One gallon per person, per day

Food: Non-perishable, needing little or no cooking. Ideas: ready-to-eat meats,

fruits, vegetables, and canned juices. High energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix, and other snack foods. Special dietary foods, such as diabetic, low salt, liquid diet, and baby food and formula. Manual can opener. Eating and drinking utensils including paper plates. Portable ice chest with ice.

Clothing and bedding: One complete change of clothing including footwear.

Sleeping bag, blanket and pillow (cots for elderly) cots will not be provided. Rain gear and sturdy shoes.

Personal items: Washcloth, towels, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, tampons, paper towels, toilet paper, wet-wipes, etc.

Medications & First-aid supplies: Medications (marked clearly with your name, dosage, type of medication, and prescribing physician).

Baby supplies: Clothes, diapers, formula, bottles, nipples, food and blankets.

Important papers: Contact info for doctor, relatives (not in the area). Identification and valuable papers.

Miscellaneous: Games, cards, toys, battery powered radios, flashlights (no candles or lanterns), batteries, or other reasonable items you may need.

Other Helpful Information:

- Take a bath and eat before you leave home.
- Register immediately upon arrival.
- Obey shelter rules.

Not allowed at a Shelter:

NO pets, alcoholic beverages, or weapons.