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PRESS RELEASE:

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Golden Plains Area
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Preparing Your Evacuation “Grab and Go” Box

Many of us in northeast Colorado thank “our lucky stars” we don’t live near the coast with the annual threat of hurricanes, or in the mountains to face the danger of forest fires. The truth of the matter came front and center again this weekend with the large wildfire in Yuma County. We all live in an area prone to natural disasters. For us, tornados and wildfires are very real and sudden disasters we should be prepared to face.

When you get the Reverse 911 call announcing the evacuation order, you may only have a few minutes to get ready to leave you home. That is not the time to think about what you may need to gather and take with you to a safe location or shelter site. It is best to do that thinking and gathering when you have a clear mind and time to collect all the necessary items. You want to create a portable file of important documents and other essentials.

Life’s emergency situations require advance preparation and planning. The first step is organizing your financial information. Do you have an appropriate place for filing each document? Have you told anyone else where you keep your vital information? Have you shared your wishes in the event of your death? Are your documents available to “grab and go” in case of evacuation? Many situations require that you take action now to avoid financial problems later.

Use a durable, sealed waterproof box, plastic tote, or backpack to hold your collection of items. Clearly label and store your “Grab and Go” container in a secure and easily accessible location in your home. And finally, grab the container and keep it with you at all times. Do not leave it unattended or in your car, as it contains valuable information.

So, let’s think about what do you need to take and have ready in a “Grab and Go” box. Put in copies of everything that is in your emergency file, and add other important papers and supplies, such as:

Washington County
181 Birch
Courthouse Annex
Akron, CO 80720
(970) 345-2287

Kit Carson County
251 16th Street, Suite 101
Burlington, CO 80807
(719) 346-5571

Phillips County
127 E. Denver
P.O. Box 328
Holyoke, CO 80734
(970) 854-3616

Yuma County
310 Ash, Suite B
County Courthouse
Wray, CO 80758
(970) 332-4151

Sedgwick County
315 Cedar
County Courthouse
Julesburg, CO 80737
(970) 474-3479

- Emergency phone numbers for family, insurance agent or company, doctors, pharmacies, financial advisors, clergy, repair contractors;
- medical prescriptions, including eyeglasses;
- copies of driver’s licenses, social security, passports and other identity documents;
- rolls of quarters
- cash or traveler’s checks for several days of living expenses;
- list of your bills/debts, when they are due and contact information;
- banking and investment account information;
- copies of insurance cards and policies;
- copies of children’s immunizations records;
- copies of the back and front of your credit cards;
- keys to safe deposit box;
- backup copies of computerized financial records;
- copies of your tax forms for the last three tax years;
- copies of your home inventory list, include everything you own with serial numbers and purchase prices, as well as photographs and/or video of these items;
- copies of any wills, durable powers of attorney, deeds, marriage certificates, military discharge papers, divorce papers and birth certificates; and
- photos, negatives, or electronic files of important photos.

The list of information in the “Grab and Go” box is so extensive because it is meant to help your family rebuild if your house gets destroyed or you don’t have access to it for a long period of time. A fact sheet on this topic of Financial Emergency Preparedness provides more information and worksheets to guide you, and can be found at <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/09156.html>. The eXtension website (www.extension.org) features a collection of articles and resources on disaster preparedness from state Extension teams around the United States.