

Red Cross Launches Relief Efforts for Oklahoma Tornado *Responses Ongoing in Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama*

Wednesday, May 12, 2010 — From the plains of the Midwest to the deep south, the American Red Cross is providing a safe place to stay and relief supplies for thousands of people displaced by tornadoes and floods. Even as relief operations continue full force in Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama, the Red Cross has opened shelters in Oklahoma after Monday's tornadoes.

"These storms have left thousands across the country without homes; without any belongings," said Joe Becker, Senior Vice President for Red Cross Disaster Services. "Our disaster teams are in the Midwest and across the South, and will be there for as long as it takes to help people get back on their feet."

Several Lee County Red Cross volunteers have either recently returned from deployments across the south or are still on assignment.

Forecasters predict another round of severe weather may hit Oklahoma Wednesday, less than 48 hours after Monday's multiple tornadoes destroyed homes and businesses, left thousands without power, and forced road closures due to overturned vehicles and structure damage. Red Cross workers are providing a safe place to stay, food, toiletries and clean-up items.

Meanwhile, people down south are still tossing furniture and appliances into the street, ripping up flooring and tearing out walls as they work on their homes after last week's flooding and tornadoes. More than 1,400 Red Cross workers from 46 different states have shelters open, are providing meals, and distributing various clean-up items and basic necessities such as toiletries. To date, the Red Cross has served approximately 190,000 meals and snacks, and distributed more than 24,000 clean-up and comfort kits.

There are three ways that people can make a donation to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund: Visit redcross.org to donate online, call 1-800-REDCROSS, or make a \$10 donation by texting REDCROSS to 90999.

Help people affected by disasters like the recent floods and tornadoes by donating to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. 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. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for disasters and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance to victims of all disasters. Call 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Contributions to the Disaster Relief Fund may be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013. Internet users can make a secure online contribution by visiting redcross.org.