

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Red Cross Chapter Awarded Emergency Response Vehicle **Emergency Response Vehicle designated to Central Wisconsin**

December 7, 2006 - Stevens Point, WI - Currently located in the parking lot outside of the local chapter of the American Red Cross is a new Emergency Response Vehicle or 'ERV'. Similar to a large scale ambulance, this new response vehicle provides another level of quality disaster response services to residents of Central Wisconsin.

The Emergency Response Vehicle was awarded to the Portage County Chapter by the American Red Cross National Headquarters located in Washington, D.C. Ownership remains with the National American Red Cross yet the vehicle is designated for use by staff and volunteers of the local chapter. This vehicle is available to respond to all Red Cross emergencies in an eight-county area. It will be headquartered in Stevens Point. The Chapter's two existing disaster trailers currently located at the Stevens Point office will be reassigned to Antigo and Rhinelander areas to improve disaster response efforts in northern Wisconsin.

"This new vehicle will enhance our capability to respond to scenes of natural and man-made disasters with very little preparation time," states Mark Damrau, Director of Emergency Services. Damrau adds. "This vehicle is also a national piece of equipment that can be assigned to disaster operations throughout the country."

Disaster Action Team volunteers recently completed the ERV training which consisted of classroom and hands-on vehicle operation to qualify them to operate this vehicle during disaster response. With this expanded capacity, Red Cross volunteers will be able to bring needed emergency supplies to the scene of a house fire or natural disaster quickly and more efficiently.

People interested in becoming Disaster Action Team (DAT) volunteers can contact the Administrative Office at 715-344-4052 for further information states Damrau.

Stop by the American Red Cross office at 3057 Michigan Avenue and see the new Emergency Response Vehicle. As warmer weather arrives, the Red Cross plans to have the vehicle on display at select community events.

The American Red Cross has 125 years of expertise in first aid and disaster response. We dedicate ourselves to helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

The Portage County Chapter of the American Red Cross serves the counties of Adams, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Portage and Vilas. Two satellite offices are located in Rhinelander and Antigo, Wisconsin. Services provided by each local chapter of the American Red Cross include biomedical services, health & safety courses for the community, armed forces emergency services, disaster services and assistance as well as international services.

For more information, please contact the local Red Cross office at 715/344-4052 or visit our website at <http://portagewi.redcross.org>

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The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Last year, almost a million volunteers and 35,000 employees helped victims of almost 75,000 disasters; taught lifesaving skills to millions; and helped U.S. service members separated from their families stay connected. Almost 4 million people gave blood through the Red Cross, the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. The American Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money and blood to do its work.

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For more information about the American Red Cross, contact the Portage County Chapter at (715) 344-4052 or visit our website at <http://portagewi.redcross.org>.