

# Make or update emergency plans during National preparedness month

## Red Cross responding to twice as many large disasters today versus 10 years ago

KANSAS — The United States is experiencing more frequent and intense extreme weather, making it more important than ever for people to be prepared for emergencies. September is National Preparedness Month and the American Red Cross urges everyone to take steps to protect their loved ones by getting their households ready now.

Last year, disasters displaced a record 11 million people in the U.S. This is the highest number for any country, accounting for roughly one-quarter of all disaster-related displacements worldwide, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

“Disasters don’t wait for the right time to strike,” said Jane Blocher, Executive Director of the Red Cross of Greater Kansas. “They happen in the middle of the night, during your commute or while your kids are at school. Disasters can turn your life upside down in a matter of minutes, and that’s why it’s important for families to be prepared.”

To help people in need, the Red Cross is now responding to nearly twice as many major disasters than it was a decade ago — about one every two weeks versus one a month. And when the worst happens, Red Cross volunteers are on the ground working with local partners to provide food, shelter, comfort and financial assistance to make sure no one faces recovery alone.

**TAKE THESE STEPS TO GET READY** - Protect your family by making a plan to stay safe, gathering important supplies and knowing how you’ll stay connected by taking these steps:

- Depending on the emergency, you may need to stay where you are or go somewhere else to stay safe. If you may need to leave, think about where you’ll go, how you’ll get there, where you’ll stay and what you’ll take with you. Plan well in advance if you’ll need help leaving or use public transportation.
- Next, gather and organize critical supplies — like food, water and medicine

— into a go-kit and a stay-at-home kit. Make sure to include backup batteries and chargers for your devices (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.), a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, and critical personal records.

- Your go-kit should include three days of supplies that you can take with you. Your stay-at-home kit should have two weeks of food and water, and a one-month supply of medications, if possible.
- Customize your kit to meet your household’s specific needs. If you have young children, don’t forget formula and diapers. If you have pets, include leashes, carriers, food, bowls, litter and a litter box.
- Finally, make a plan to reconnect with loved ones if you’re separated or if the phone or internet is down. Write down important phone numbers on a contact card and carry it with you.

Download the free Red Cross Emergency app for weather alerts, safety steps for different emergencies and expert advice in both English and Spanish. Don’t forget to sign up for local government emergency alerts to get critical local information — like evacuation notices — during an emergency.

People can also help their community be better prepared for disasters by giving blood, taking a class in lifesaving skills like CPR, or becoming a Red Cross volunteer. Visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (800-733-2767) to learn more today.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or [CruzRojaAmericana.org](http://CruzRojaAmericana.org), or follow us on social media.



The Beloit City Crew is replacing a short stretch of water main on East South Street. They started on a Sunday to not disrupt business hours for others. There are a few more parts to go to hook into the hydrant, and then they will be finished.

SHARON SAHLFELD PHOTO

## City Council continues with several projects

BY SHARON SAHLFELD  
Call Editor

The Beloit City Council meeting was held on Sept. 3, with all councilors in attendance.

The councilors were asked if they had any comments, and Tony Gengler voiced his concerns about Elm Street being closed to the Fertilizer Plant without any traffic signs indicating so. The matter will be looked into. Gretchen Staples asked if the walking trail will remain open after the new houses, north of Beloit, are built. Attorney Katie Schroeder said it is plotted as a trail, so yes, it will remain open. Councilor Andrew Grabon voiced how great the Walnut Street project looks, which is now open to the public to drive through, for now.

In the City Attorney Report, Katie Schroeder stated that she has met with Mr. Thiessen regarding the farmland he leases, where the solar power project will extend into. She has also sent out letters to the pipeline owners about getting it started. A meeting will be held on Sept. 17 to discuss with people about the Eighth Street project.

City Manager Halley Roberson reported on updates concerning the EDA grant, with company evaluations being completed for the RFQ. Three companies are before the council to move onto the next phase.

Walnut Street was delayed due to signage installation. Storm drainage is for mid-March to begin Phase 2.

Communication efforts are underway with the pipeline path.

The Armory move is underway, and it has since been found that they may be able to use the existing heaters in the building that will house the Parks and Recreation crew.

Roberson attended a KMU Energy Summit recently and echoed everything discussed here in Beloit.

A Business Retention and Expansion initiative, sponsored by Fort Hays, is completed and submitted. This was possible because of the merger of Fort HaysTech | North Central in Beloit.

A group of dedicated volunteers continues to meet and collaborate with Pawnee Mental Health to provide support for health services in Beloit.

The Moderate Income Housing (MIH) has held good communication with possibly two houses being sold already.

Mid States plans to be in Beloit in September to review solar and battery connections/general assessment, and wastewater treatment plant electric needs.

The KCC Pole/Resiliency grant award is still in place, with DOE conducting another review of the grant (fourth review), requesting more detailed breakdowns.

A Wastewater Vac truck replacement is still being looked into.

A bond process for the solar and battery is moving forward—with no needed action for the council at this time.

Five companies responded to the EDA RFQ, with all submissions being compiled and critiqued. Interviews will move

forward with the top three on interviews. “It was nice to have five businesses respond,” said Roberson.

The council will move forward on reviewing RFP edits that have been submitted.

Utility Billing Clerk, Sheli Anderson, was present to talk about the metering replacement project timeline, and will post on the city website to allow six weeks for companies to respond and to come up with recommendations. It was decided to elect the month of November to accept one of the proposals, with Feb. 2027 as the end date to discontinue the electric metering system, and hopes of replacing them by 2026.

Anderson has reached out to other companies to understand what options are available, as the city’s current company will no longer support Beloit’s metering system.

Naasz asked about the pricing estimation and how this will be funded. Roberson said it is estimated at a \$1 million project and will be taken out of the electric fund through the Equipment fund.

Anderson said Beloit is currently replacing the water meter system, which takes more time than replacing the electric meters.

Beloit will be asking companies about their pricing for the electric project, including the type of installation provided and the warranty’s longevity. Grant money is being looked into, and more of this issue will be discussed in the next meeting’s work session.

“We really want to thank Sheli Anderson for working on this,” said Roberson. “She has really worked hard.

Police Chief Chad Lackey reported that the Walnut Street project was open and looked great. He has been asked to present a 30-minute talk during a workshop on Sept. 16 at the Beloit Methodist Church on suicide prevention. Four speakers have been asked to present at the event. The department has a new officer who recently completed his 12 weeks in the academy, Phase 1. Lackey will be attending the District Kansas Peace Officers Association meeting, which now has 32 members. They are looking for a new President, Vice President and Sergeant in Arms.

Roberson reported on Community Development for Emily Benedick, who was not present, stating that she has been working on the MIH and Patterson grants.

The last city council minutes and appropriations were approved in their entirety.

Ordinance 2373 Special Assessments; Ordinance 2374 Standard Traffic Ordinance; and Ordinance 2375 UPOC Uniform Public Offense Code were all three approved in their existence.

In Formal actions, the Airport Hangar Construction contract with the selected company is working on getting the project started and is waiting on the grants that have been approved.

The Realtor for the old library/hospice building was approved for Hansen Realty at a 4.50 percent rate.

Thank You for Reading The Beloit Call!

## Beloit Chamber Commerce

### Member Spotlight



#### Education at Work: Fort Hays Tech | North Central’s Impact on Our Region

The Beloit Area Chamber is proud to spotlight Fort Hays Tech | North Central College, a driving force in both education and economic growth for our region. Under the leadership of President Eric Burks, the college continues its mission of “changing lives” by preparing students for success while strengthening the communities it serves.

As an accredited institution, Fort Hays Tech | North Central offers transferable credits—allowing students to continue their education anywhere. Beyond the classroom, the college generates over \$30 million in annual economic activity across its 18-county service area, making it a vital contributor to regional prosperity.

Although recently renamed through its affiliation with Fort Hays State University, the college remains an independent entity with its own governance. This partnership, however, opens doors to expanded opportunities for students and businesses alike.

Since its founding in Beloit, the college has worked to attract and retain young people, many of whom stay after graduation to live, work, and invest locally. As President Burks shared, “Education is a key that opens doors of opportunity... we are truly making a difference for students, families, our communities, and our region.”

The Chamber is grateful to count Fort Hays Tech | North Central College as a member, a partner, and a leader in shaping both people and communities. Together, we share the vision of a stronger, more vibrant region built on opportunity, innovation, and collaboration.

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