



Live Safe. Be Prepared.

**June 30, 2004
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ntb group joins American Red Cross in promoting hurricane awareness

ntb group's disaster preparedness experts were invited to speak at an American Red Cross hurricane awareness event, June 19, in the Vero Beach Lowe's parking lot.

"We were honored to be among those selected to help get the word out about hurricane preparedness," said Paula Lerner, ntb group founder. "We strongly support the American Red Cross in their efforts, and greatly appreciate the generosity of Lowe's in providing a venue for this important meeting."

Hosted by Frank Hoover, Director of Emergency services of the North Treasure Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross, the event included numerous speakers, including WPBF News 25 weatherman Mike Lyons. Topics of discussion included hurricane forecasting, shutter installation, storm shelters, and disaster-related insurance issues. ntb group unveiled its KeePRS (Keep Personal Records Secure) document archiving product – a portion of the proceeds from which will be donated to the North Treasure Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross.

"The work of the Red Cross is vitally important, and we're happy to be able to support them in any way we can," said Tom Dell, ntb group partner. "Their mission and ours are very closely related."

KeePRS is a CD-ROM based digital inventory of a client's important documents, such as ID papers, titles, insurance, receipts, tax returns – in short, all the information one would need to have safely stored in the event of a disaster. Applauded by emergency management and insurance professionals, KeePRS is a valuable tool in disaster preparedness.

The need for hurricane preparedness is greater this year than it has been in some time, Hoover said. All indicators are that the path of any hurricanes formed this year will drift towards Florida because of a phenomenon known as the "Bermuda High."



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The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is anticipating that between six and eight storms will become hurricanes -- with two to four storms developing into major hurricanes ranked as Category 3 or higher -- during the season that runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. A Category 3 storm can cause extensive damage, with winds between 111 and 130 mph. A Category 5 storm has winds greater than 155 mph and can cause catastrophic damage.

The Vero Beach area gets brushed or hit by a hurricane every 3.17 years, according to HurricaneCity.com (<http://www.hurricanecity.com/city/vero.htm>). As of the end of 2003, hurricanes and tropical storms had come within 60 miles of the city 42 times in the previous 133 years. On average, Vero Beach experiences a direct hit (within 40 miles) every 13.3 years. Among the unwanted visitors to the area have been King, Judith, Cleo, Isabelle, David, Dennis, Bob, Gordon, Erin, Jerry, and in 1999: Irene. Luckily, major damage has so far been avoided.

One of the first steps for residents should be to prepare an Emergency Preparedness Kit (EPK) to help them through the first few hours and days after disaster strikes, Lerner said. Using information from the Red Cross and government sources, ntb group has compiled an EPK checklist. Ideally, the EPK will contain a KeePRS (<http://www.ntb-group.com/keeprs.html>) CD-ROM, which archives vital information, such as deeds, titles, licenses, investments, insurance, bank accounts, and identity papers. In addition to the EPK, residents should have an evacuation plan that can be quickly called into play if a threat approaches.

The challenge to businesses in times of danger is even greater, Dell said. A business should have the following in place when heading into hurricane season (at minimum):

- Disaster Preparedness Plan - A plan that details what employees will do and where they will go as danger approaches. This contains items of both immediate urgency, such as building exit routes, and important but often overlooked tasks, like turning off critical equipment and coffee pots.
- Backup System - Regularly implemented procedures and equipment that duplicate critical business information and store it in containers and media that can be moved offsite.
- Disaster Recovery Plan - Similar to the preparedness plan, these are procedures for how the organization will get back in business in a disaster's aftermath.



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ntb group is ready to offer its experience in this area through consulting, Dell said. In addition, ntb group will be sponsoring free, no-obligation workshops in the coming weeks to "get the word out," he said. One such event is scheduled for Sept. 28 at the Vero Beach Chamber of Commerce.

For additional information on hurricane preparedness and other issues, visit ntb group's Info Center on the Web at <http://www.ntb-group.com/infocenter.html> or call ntb group at 772-538-1921. For more information on the North Treasure Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross, visit <http://chapters.redcross.org/fl/northtreasurecoast> or call (772) 562-2549.

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