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Flood victims to receive winter utility assistance

*Community Foundation announces first distribution
of Immediate Assistance Fund for Flood Relief*

Medicine Hat, Alberta (November 24, 2010) – Five months ago, the Community Foundation began a quest to fill a void in flood relief. While several organizations took care of flood victims’ immediate needs, the board of directors of the Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta envisioned assisting in the mid-to long-term needs of flood victims.

Over \$75,000 has been raised in the fund since the issue was first discussed, and the Community Foundation today announced its first distributions. Today’s cheques totaling \$66,300 will support those hardest hit in June’s floods by paying a large portion of victims’ winter utility bills. Cypress County will receive \$57,200 for its victims and the City of Medicine Hat will receive \$9,100.

Mike Christie, executive director of the Community Foundation, stated that staff and board members spent several months meeting with affected parties and organizations before concluding how to best spend the fund.

“It was important to us that we lead a transparent, open process and do our due diligence of research regarding the matter,” he said. “We are as accountable to our donors in this matter as we would be with any Community Foundation fund.”

The intention of the Immediate Assistance Fund for Flood Relief is to assist those hardest hit by the flood. People whose properties were deemed uninhabitable at any point due to structural or health issues are eligible. Affected parties in Medicine Hat will be contacted by city officials, and those in Cypress County should contact the Cypress County office.

“It seems like such a simple thing to go pay your utility bill,” Christie added. “But to people struggling with bills from trying to rebuild their homes, it may be hard to scrape together the funds to keep your

family warm during these cold months. We hope that this will make it easier for these families to breathe easier this winter.”

The Immediate Assistance Fund for Flood Relief began soon after the June flooding as donor requests came into the Foundation immediately.

“We have an amazing community and it was overwhelming how many people offered donations,” Christie said. “From large sponsored barbecues to children donating their birthday gifts, ‘Hatters once again proved to us what a generous spirit they have.’”

All money donated to the fund will be used for flood victims, with the Foundation taking no administration fee. Donations to the fund are still being accepted and will be used in flood relief efforts. Several thousand dollars have been raised in the last month alone.

Although the bulk of the money raised will be distributed at this time, just under \$9,000 will be left in the Immediate Assistance Fund for Flood Relief. The remaining dollars will be distributed over the next few months as more unmet needs are brought to the foundation’s attention.

For more information, please contact the Community Foundation office at (403) 527-9038.