



AFSA Education Foundation

919 18th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 296-5544 Fax: (202) 223-0321 Web site: www.afsaef.org

For Immediate Release

Contact: Lynne Strang
(202) 466-8613

Emergency Preparations Should Include Finances, Too

AFSAEF Offers Tips to Secure Finances before Natural Disasters Strike

WASHINGTON, May 21, 2009 . . . Although the 2009 hurricane outlook released today from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is for a near-normal season, this doesn't take away from the importance of a well-thought-out emergency preparedness plan. Readying family finances for natural disasters is a crucial yet often-overlooked part of the preparation process, says the American Financial Services Association Education Foundation (AFSAEF).

"Taking time to collect financial information before a disaster strikes can save precious time in the aftermath of one," says Susie Irvine, AFSAEF President & CEO. "The more information you have about your finances – including contact phone numbers – the more likely you will get help promptly."

Most importantly, Irvine advises, is to keep all important papers – such as insurance policies, checking and savings account information, and backups of computer files – in a secure location that is unlikely to be damaged during a natural disaster. Likewise, setting aside money in a checking or savings account for easy withdrawal in an emergency can save valuable time, she notes.

Consumers still have time to make financial preparations before the hurricane season begins June 1. Additional guidance on preparing family finances in the case of a natural disaster is available in the free AFSAEF brochure "When Natural Disaster Strikes." The brochure also offers tips on protecting oneself from fraud following a natural disaster and the options many creditors provide customers to help them in their recovery process.

"When Natural Disaster Strikes" can be downloaded for free from the AFSAEF's Web site (www.afsaef.org) under the publications tab. Consumers may also obtain a free copy of the pamphlet by calling the foundation toll free at 888-400-2233.

"In today's economy, many borrowers are already struggling to pay their mortgages and other bills, meaning a bad storm could push them over the brink financially," says Irvine. "They simply cannot afford to be unprepared."

Based in Washington, D.C., the AFSA Education Foundation's mission is to help consumers realize the benefits of responsible money management, understand the credit process and seek help if credit problems occur. It is affiliated with the American Financial Services Association (AFSA), the national trade association for the consumer credit industry, protecting access to credit and consumer choice.

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