

American Red Cross

Media Alert

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Poarch Creek Indians and the American Red Cross team up for series of blood drives

Organizations hope to help head off a the traditional summer shortfall in the blood supply with three blood drives scheduled for the month of June

(June 6, 2007)- In June, the days grow longer, the temperatures rise and most minds are on the fun that only summer can bring. However, for those who find themselves in need of blood or blood products, the summer can also be a frightening time when the need for blood increases as the blood supply diminishes.

In an effort to prepare for the first half of the summer travel season, the American Red Cross has partnered with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to save lives through blood donation with three joint blood drives at gaming properties in Atmore, Wetumpka and Montgomery. The drives are scheduled as follow:

- 06/08/2007: Tallapoosa Entertainment Center, 1801 Eddie Tullis Road, Montgomery, AL 36117 (11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)
- 06/08/2007: Riverside Entertainment Center, 100 River Oaks Drive, Wetumpka, AL 36092 (11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)
- 06/25/2007: Creek Entertainment Center, 120 Poarch Road, Atmore, AL 36504 (11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

According to Buford L. Rolin, Tribal Chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, the Tribe has had a strong working relationship with the American Red Cross for years.

“After Hurricane Ivan hit our tribal community, the Red Cross was there and helped us through that critical time. It is a privilege to return some of the good work and

good will they shared with us. We are proud to support these Red Cross blood drives and the lives they may save,” said Rolin.

Members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians are descendents of a segment of the original Creek Nation, which once covered nearly all of Alabama and Georgia. The Poarch Creeks remained in Alabama following the Indian Removal and have lived together for nearly 200 years in and around the reservation in Poarch, Alabama (located eight miles northwest of Atmore, Alabama in rural Escambia County, and 57 miles east of Mobile).

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is the only federally recognized Indian Tribe in the state of Alabama, functioning as a sovereign nation with its own system of government and bylaws. The Tribe operates a variety of economic enterprises, and owns three gaming facilities which employ tribal members and hundreds of south and central Alabama residents. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians actively contributes to economic, educational, social and cultural partnerships that benefit Alabama and its citizens.

The American Red Cross is charged with providing blood and blood products to over 100 hospitals in the Alabama and Central Gulf Coast Region, and while it may be difficult to find the time to donate amidst the flurry of summertime activity, patients in the region’s hospitals are in desperate need of live-giving blood.

“While most minds will be on the outdoor activities and fun of the summertime, the need for life-saving blood remains constant regardless of the season,” said Evan Duffy, Senior Communications Specialist for the American Red Cross. “In the summer, the blood supply traditionally suffers, creating an emergency situation. Because students, who represent about 21 percent of the blood supply, are out of school and away from drives in the summer, the demand for blood increases. Drives such as this one give donors a chance to quickly and conveniently give the gift of life. It only takes an hour, and that hour can translate into a lifetime of hours for a hospital patient in need of blood.”

During the summer months, students are away from class and therefore aren’t available for school blood drives. Regular donors who typically give at their place of business are on vacation, driving donor rates down even further. The shortage is compounded by the fact that the demand for blood rises in the summer, due to summer vacation travel and increased outdoor activity. When the threat of tropical weather is thrown into the equation, the summer represents one of the most unstable periods in terms of the blood supply.

Blood, moreover blood donors, can save up to two lives per donation. The statistics are staggering. Every two seconds, someone in our region needs blood to survive. Some 700 donations are needed per day in our region alone just to meet the current need for blood, creating a constantly critical need for donors who roll up their

sleeves to save the lives of their neighbors. The victim of a traffic accident could need between four and 100 units of blood. The average heart bypass patient needs four to six units. The need for blood is constant, because trauma and emergency medical procedures never take a vacation.

To donate, you must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in good health. Donors must also show identification in the form of a driver's license or ARC donor card. If you are sick and cannot donate, please encourage a friend or loved one to donate in your place. If everyone who could donate would donate, there would never be a blood shortage in our area.

The American Red Cross will give a little back to the donors who give so much of their own time, blood and resources during this time of the year. All donors who give in the month of June will receive a t-shirt and ball cap. All presenting donors will also be entered into a regional drawing for one of two \$750 Citgo gas cards.

Be a hero to your neighbors in need and touch countless lives. This year, give someone the best gift they'll ever receive: the gift of life. There is no greater gift one can give.

Give blood, give life