

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 22, 2011

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Human Services hires Korzeniewski to lead disaster preparedness

BISMARCK, N.D. – The N.D. Department of Human Services has hired Russ Korzeniewski to lead its disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, as well as risk management efforts.

The department is responsible for planning and coordinating evacuation, sheltering, and mass care activities for North Dakota when a disaster's scope exceeds or is expected to exceed local resources, and a state response is requested. Korzeniewski will coordinate with the N.D. Department of Emergency Services, FEMA, and the American Red Cross, as well as other agencies. He will also lead internal continuity of operations planning efforts, injury prevention, and risk management.

Korzeniewski previously worked as the director of health and safety programs and disaster services for the American Red Cross in the Black Hills area. He has expertise in emergency operation planning, shelter operations, continuity of operations planning, and community preparedness. He also has experience as a trainer, and in risk management, personnel management, and volunteer management. He has a master's degree in human resource management and a bachelor's degree in social psychology.

Prior to his work with the American Red Cross, Korzeniewski worked as a human resource officer for the Community Health Center of the Black Hills, and as a mental health clinic manager and treatment professional at Ellsworth Air Force Base in S.D. He served in the United States Air Force for two decades.

One in five North Dakotans, many of them vulnerable, rely on the department's services and programs, and most health and human service providers in the state rely on the department for uninterrupted funding support. During disasters, the department supports local preparedness, sheltering, and mass care efforts by securing resources and working with partners to meet the needs of affected individuals. The department administers the disaster supplemental nutrition assistance program with county partners and crisis counseling grants when federal partners authorize those efforts.

At the local level, employees at the department's eight regional human service centers work with vulnerable clients with disabilities assuring they are aware of disaster developments and have an evacuation and shelter plan, and providing assistance relocating vulnerable clients if needed. The human service centers also participate in local disaster preparedness efforts and provide disaster mental health and other support in the community.

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