

## **Birdland - Zone One - Communications Group Update: 6-18-08 6:30 PM**

**The Family and Business Assistance Center at Union Park will remain open Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> and Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am - 6:00 pm.**

People who come to the “Family and Business Assistance Center” will be able to receive: Clean-up kits, gloves, masks, and goggles, sun screen, insect repellent, educational information about proper clean-up after a flood, tetanus shots and bottled water.

Families will be able to enroll, on site, for the Polk County General Assistance and Emergency Repair programs and a mental health counselor will also be available at the location.

Prior to the occupation, any building that was damaged during the flood must pass a building safety and environmental assessment. If residents are having difficulty connecting with an inspector, they should call 283-4500.

### **United Way to Organize Clean-Up Team to Assist Residents**

United Way of Central Iowa is taking requests from residents for volunteers to clean up homes in Birdland, Pleasant Hill and unincorporated Polk County. United Way of Central Iowa representatives will be stationed at the designated Family and Business Assistance Centers in Union Park and for Unincorporated Polk County (at the corner of 56<sup>th</sup> Place and NW 26<sup>th</sup> Street). Residents may go there to request help with clean up and recovery. Residents from Pleasant Hill who need clean-up assistance can call “211”.

Polk County United Way expects volunteers will be needed for clean-up activities starting Saturday, June 21. More information will be communicated to all registered volunteers by Friday at 12 p.m. If those interested in helping with the clean-up effort, have not yet registered, they should do so by calling 2-1-1 or online at [www.unitedwaydm.org](http://www.unitedwaydm.org)

**Polk County Health Department officials strongly discourage children under the age of five being in any of these homes, even if they have been cleared (or “green-ticketed”) for occupancy, until all the cleaning and repair work has been completed.**

The City of Des Moines warns victims of the recent flood to beware of scam artists. Victims should not give out personal information to anyone without proper identification. If a victim suspects somebody is not on the up and up, they should hang up the phone or close the door, and call the Des Moines Police Department on the non-emergency line at 283-4811.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials want victims to know that special procedures are used whenever personal information must be obtained from applicants. First, if an applicant calls the FEMA toll-free registration number at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**, or registers at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov), they can be assured that their information is secure.

Second, a bank account number will only be discussed if an applicant asks a government agency to make a direct deposit into their account. And most importantly, there are two identification numbers assigned to every application. Each person who calls FEMA to register for help gets a FEMA number of

their own and they are told the personal ID number of their case worker. A legitimate government agent who calls an applicant will always be able to tell the applicant both of these numbers. FEMA and other government agencies such as the U.S. Small Business Administration will never ask for money for their services.

When hiring contractors to assist with repairs, residents should:

- Check references.
- Get a written estimate.
- Use reliable, licensed contractors. A list of licensed contractors for electrical, plumbing, and mechanical contractors is available on the City of Des Moines website at [www.dmgov.org](http://www.dmgov.org) (under Hot Topics)
- Insist on a written contract. Get all guarantees of work in writing.
- Obtain a local building permit. City of Des Moines is waiving permit fees associated with this event; however permits are still required. If residents and businesses have been cleared to enter their property they may begin the cleanup process and contact the Permit Center by phone at 283-4200 or on site at the Central Library, 1000 Grand Avenue, to begin necessary repairs.
- Make final payments only when the work is completed.

If there are particular topics of interest or questions you feel should be covered, please let us know.

Marylee Woods  
City Manager's Office  
City of Des Moines  
400 Robert D. Ray Drive  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
515-283-4501  
[www.dmgov.org](http://www.dmgov.org)  
[mlwoods@dmgov.org](mailto:mlwoods@dmgov.org)