

# *PRESS RELEASE*



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# County Opens Shelters for Power Outage Victims

Shelter Opened at 10:30 a.m. Friday at the American Red Cross;  
A Second Shelter Opening at 5 p.m. at Anchor Baptist Church

**January 16, 2009 – Henderson County, NC:** A shelter for Henderson County power outage victims is now open at the American Red Cross at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Grove Street in Hendersonville. At 5 p.m. today a second shelter will open at Anchor Baptist Church 3232 Hendersonville Hwy in Pisgah Forest NC. Henderson County Emergency Management, the Department of Social Services and the American Red Cross partner to open the shelters.

"Residents who need shelter are encouraged to go to the American Red Cross, Anchor Baptist Church or to call 693-5605, a phone number that is answered 24-hours per day if they need shelter, transportation, blankets or any other assistance during the outage," said County Manager Steve Wyatt.

"Residents need to take steps to make sure that their families are safe. It is a dangerous cold when you factor in the air temperature and the wind chill factor for humans and animals," Mr. Wyatt said.

Emergency Services Director Rocky Hyder said "We've had the Red Cross Shelter open since 10:30 a.m. today [Friday, January 16, 2009] and we have no customers as of now, but that's not unusual," said. "Typically, people are optimistic and will try to wait out a power outage."

Mr. Hyder has asked Council on Aging to contact their clients who live in the power outage area to insure they are okay as well, he said.

The Department of Social Services has activated its emergency plan and the American Red Cross is coordinating addressing needs for citizens with health problems or that need special assistance. Social workers are standing by to assist on a case by case basis. Call the American Red Cross at 693-5605.

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Animal safety is also a concern. "The best thing to do for your animals in this cold weather is to bring them inside," said Brad Rayfield, Animal Services Director for Henderson County. "If they are outside, they need a wind block like a doghouse, with warm bedding and plenty of food and water that is not frozen."

The county has also established several back-up shelters should the American Red Cross and Anchor Baptist Church exceed capacity. There are backup shelters lined up at the Salvation Army and First Baptist Church.

"It's better to be safe than sorry," said Mr. Wyatt. "If you have any doubt about your ability to weather this outage we are here to help and the Red Cross is a great organization and we really appreciate what they do."

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