



American Red Cross  
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## News Release NEWS RELEASE

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### **Local Chapters Approach Future As One American Red Cross**

*Manitowoc, Calumet & Sheboygan Chapters Unify Talents and Resources*

**Editor's Note: Embargoed until March 21, 2010. We appreciate your confidentiality until this date.**

MANITOWOC, WI – The American Red Cross serves communities around the block, across the country and around the globe everyday. Locally, our Board of Directors for the tri-county area has recommended two local Chapters consolidate to ensure the local identity and strengths of the existing Chapters are preserved. Therefore, on July 1, 2010, the Manitowoc/Calumet Chapter and the Sheboygan County Chapter will consolidate resources.

In doing so, programs and services will not only be maintained, but strengthened as operating costs will be reduced. The new unified Chapter will be designed to help facilitate the sharing of responsibilities and resources. "What is most important is that the community can rely on our services 24/7 through shared services, reduced costs and that we are still, and always will be, a volunteer led organization," stated Paul Callan, the Manitowoc/Calumet Chapter Board Chair.

The two current boards have been strategically planning for several months and have determined that consolidation was the best course of action. A new Board of Directors will be formed by combining the two current volunteer boards. Their expanded role will ensure community support for all three counties and will have direct impact on the delivery of essential services. The joint board will partner with the Chapter Executive, Sherry Rezba, in developing and monitoring local strategies to deliver mission related services, fundraising, the Chapter budget and community outreach.

Paul Kuplic, the Sheboygan Board Chair added, "While some consolidation or merger conversations might involve a weak or failed entity being absorbed by a stronger one, this situation features two viable, well-supported organizations. Our situation provides the opportunity to combine from a position of strength and, in doing so, preempt any challenges that could threaten the viability of one or more of the Chapters in the future."

This new structure allows the Red Cross quicker access to resources, particularly in times of disasters. The combined ability to respond as a newly formed Chapter now includes 258 trained volunteers. Collectively, disaster volunteers have responded to 21 local disasters (mostly residential fires) and several have been deployed nationally to support communities around the country. In addition, the Chapters have trained 9,000 community members in disaster preparedness.

The current blood donation programs will be assessed as well. Last year, 4,727 units of blood were collected and each can save up to three lives. Collection sites and information about up-coming community blood drives will continue to be available at [www.givelife.com](http://www.givelife.com).

The 2032 Erie Avenue, Sheboygan location will be the administrative office and training facility, while the 205 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Manitowoc office will serve as a service delivery and training location as well. In the past year, nearly 15,000 individuals were trained and certified, in life-saving skills such as people and pet First Aid, CPR, Automated External Defibrillator use, Water Safety and more.

The Sheboygan Chapter was chartered in 1916 and the Manitowoc/Calumet Chapter in 1917. Both have a long history of meeting the needs of local families and communities. The Red Cross will

continue to meet the needs of military families, disaster victims, hospital patients relying on blood donors, and those who turn to the Red Cross for lifesaving training.

The decision to explore and ultimately take this route involved multiple elements, including a One Red Cross transformation as this national non-profit entity evolves. The Chapter will be positioned in the Northeast Wisconsin Region. This is important because the regional headquarters in Oshkosh provides new support functions which were not available even a few years ago. They include unified accounting, a central database, shared resources and many collaborative efforts designed to reduce costs, streamline programs and services all while maximizing volunteer and financial supporter contributions.

The Northeast Wisconsin Region is a grouping of six chapters now serving 20 counties with a mission to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters. To learn more about Red Cross programs, volunteer opportunities, and how you can help, contact the Northeast region at 920-231-3590 or visit [www.NewRedCross.org](http://www.NewRedCross.org)

**About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.*