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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2008

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Mobile Chosen as Pilot Site for National Community Emergency Preparedness Program

(Mobile, Ala.) – Mobile has been chosen as the national pilot site by the OASIS Foundation of America (OFA), headquartered in Montgomery, Ala., for a community-based readiness and response program. The announcement was made Jan. 28 at a media briefing held at the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce that included OASIS representatives, officials from the city and county, law enforcement agencies, the United Way of Southwest Alabama, The American Red Cross, Gulf Coast Chapter and area emergency management leaders.

Joe Montgomery, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of OFA and CEO of the OASIS Ad Group, and Mike Llewellyn, president of OASIS, which is headquartered in Lexington, Ky., said that the organization is the nation's only philanthropy whose singular mission is to empower communities through capacity-building, access to vital resources and the providing of necessary tools to be ready for any type of disaster. To better meet the Foundation's objectives, OFA has partnered with the United Ways of Alabama (UWAL), the association of the state's 26 individual United Ways, and brings together relevant representatives of government, non-profit, faith-based and business sectors in order to build consensus, heighten cooperation and improve effectiveness.

"The opportunity presented to us by the Oasis Ad Group is an outstanding statement to their commitment to be good corporate citizens", says Becky Booker UWAL executive director. "The creation of a foundation whose sole mission is community preparedness is not only badly needed, but a blessing many thought would never occur". What is about to happen here will make so many



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communities safer and aware of services right in their communities that can improve they way they live.”

OFA programs include support of a United Way 2-1-1 Information and Referral System, a Supplies on Site initiative and an Emergency Broadcasting Network.

Spearheaded in Alabama by UWAL, the 2-1-1 program consists of an easy-to-remember, 3-digit telephone number which connects citizens with important community services and volunteer opportunities. While services do currently vary by community, they include basic human needs; physical and mental health resources; supports for employment, older Americans and persons with disabilities as well as those for children, youth and families.

“United Way of Southwest Alabama is pleased to have the opportunity to partner with the Oasis Foundation of America. Our goal at United Way is to create lasting positive change in our community, so our relationship with OFA is a natural fit,” stated Angelo Miller, executive director of United Way of Southwest Alabama.

The Supplies on Site initiative, also known as the S.O.S. program, is designed to pre-stage and pre-deploy disaster commodities directly into communities at no expense to the community. These supplies are stored in sturdy, durable and attractive READI-Port stations, approximately 8'x10'x16' in size, that will be strategically placed within the community. OFA works with local emergency management agencies to determine specific supply and storage needs with the result being a comprehensive mapping of inventories accessible at required times. The S.O.S. program is funded primarily by revenues generated from the sale of advertising; which is displayed digitally in state-of-the-art high definition on the sides of the READI-Port stations. The pilot program in Mobile includes a READI-Port station currently located on-site at the American Red Cross headquarters in downtown Mobile at the intersection of Broad and Conti streets. This station will remain at that location throughout the Mobile Mardi Gras season and beyond, and is stocked with supplies that can be



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accessed by local law enforcement agencies during any carnival-related emergency. According to Montgomery and Llewellyn, the signage will also be available for public service announcements during non-emergency times. Such announcements include Amber Alerts, weather bulletins, traffic notices and crime detection.

The third program offered by OFA is the Emergency Broadcasting Network that will be utilized during declared emergency situations. During such times, OFA officials said appropriate community authority will be granted the right to take control of the READI-Port stations entire digital display capacity for issuing pertinent community directives. OFA emphasized this program could be of particular significance to Mobile during the hurricane season.

According to Walt Dickerson, director of the Mobile County Emergency Management Agency, “Pre-deployment of disaster commodities are a vital component for Mobile County, especially in case of hurricanes. Couple the S.O.S. program with the Emergency Broadcasting Network and we have been given two tremendous assets for the protection of our citizens.”

Montgomery and Llewellyn indicated that if the pilot program is successful, Mobile could see more READI-Port stations deployed within the next several months.

“We are very excited about the possibilities for Mobile and the entire country. It is our goal to observe the effectiveness of the READI-Port station over the next few months, make any necessary adjustments and hopefully proceed with full implementation in this area. If things work well in Mobile, we will roll out our programs in other cities, first in Alabama and then throughout the country,” they said.

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