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PRESS RELEASE

MARCH IS FLOOD AWARENESS MONTH

Flood awareness is particularly important since Iowa is still recovering from the floods and storms of 2008. The 2008 disaster was not only the worst natural disaster to strike the state, but is considered one of the largest disasters on record in U.S. history.

The Rebuild Iowa Office, the Iowa Insurance Division, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division will share flood-related information and safety tips with the media and the public throughout the month of March. Special presentations have also been organized in various communities about the benefits of flood insurance and preparing for future disasters.

On Thursday, Governor Culver will sign a proclamation declaring March Flood Awareness Month at a public event at the Capitol at 8:30 a.m.

State officials advise people to start assessing their risk of flooding by being aware of whether they live in or near a flood plain, discussing flood preparations with their families, and considering flood insurance. Iowans who rent or own a home or business should also be aware of the availability of flood insurance. Iowans want to consider looking into the insurance as soon as possible, because unlike homeowner's insurance, there is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance begins once a person purchases a policy. Iowans can find out more by visiting the Rebuild Iowa Office's Web site at www.rio.iowa.gov.

Another helpful Web site for Iowans to refer to is www.FloodSmart.gov. Homeowners, renters and small business owners can estimate their premiums, calculate their flood insurance rate and find a local insurance agent qualified to sell flood insurance on this site. There are currently 15,360 flood insurance policies in Iowa, up approximately 40-percent from this time in 2008.

Lastly, Iowa's Homeland and Security Management Division offers three simple steps for Iowans to protect themselves and their families before a flood or disaster occurs:

- Learn about and stay aware of flood risks in your community.
- Work with family members to put together a family emergency and evacuation plan.
- Put together an emergency kit before a disaster strikes.

Iowans can learn more about flood safety tips, evacuation plans and how to prepare for a disaster at www.bereadyiowa.org.