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United Way Initiates Disaster Fund

(Abingdon, VA) – United Way of Russell and Washington Counties, CEO, Travis Staton, released the following statement today about the recent disaster in Southwest Virginia and United Way’s efforts to help victims of this tragedy:

United Way of Russell and Washington Counties expresses its support for those affected by this horrific tragedy, and our condolences to the many Southwest Virginia’s living in our community that have lost loves ones, friends and relatives. The United Way of Russell and Washington Counties is committed to helping with long-term recovery efforts in the aftermath of this crisis.

United Way of Russell and Washington Counties Team is working closely with the American Red Cross and the Washington County Department of Social Services for insights into the needs on the ground and how to most effectively assist in long-term recovery efforts.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

The United Way of Russell and Washington Counties and its corporate partners are responding with immediate efforts and preparing for recovery and long-term rebuilding.

United Way's role will be to support long-term recovery efforts to rebuild lives and communities devastated by the disaster and to address educational, financial and health-related challenges.

United Way Russell and Washington Counties has created the [United Way Disaster Support Fund](#), introduced a text-to-give program, and is coordinating the integration of efforts from non-profit agencies around the area around the region, in cooperation with our corporate partners.

MOBILIZATION OF CORPORATE PARTNERS LOCALLY

Together with our corporate partners we are mobilizing and engaging their employees to contribute financial donations, as well as food and cleaning supplies. Corporations are also making financial contributions, and offering in-kind donations of medicines, logistics services, food, water and travel. These corporate partners include Food City, First Bank and Trust Company, Universal Fibers Systems, Alpha Natural Resources, BVU, and Mountain States Health Alliance (Johnston Memorial Hospital).

RECOVERY AND LONG-TERM REBUILDING

United Way's long-term response will be coordinated through our partner agencies in Southwest Virginia. Our members are working with several community networks to help assess their needs. We expect that process to continue for some time, given the extent of the devastation. United Way will focus on education, income and health, helping reestablish the educational and health infrastructure of Southwest Virginia Communities, and work to improve the income-earning potential of their families.

United Way will look forward to creating partnerships with governments, aid institutions, corporations, foundations and private citizens across the region to help rebuild Southwest Virginia.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Due to the magnitude of the disaster, United Way of Russell and Washington Counties has created the United Way Disaster Support Fund to help Southwest Virginians rebuild their lives. Contributions to the United Way Disaster Support Fund are designated to support the recovery and long-term recovery efforts to rebuild lives and infrastructure devastated by the storms across Southwest Virginia Communities. Currently United Way of Russell and Washington Counties has committed \$100,000 of the organizations own monies and is working with other corporation in identifying match dollars to a recent challenge of \$50,000 from Alpha Natural Resources to support the efforts of the American Red Cross. Currently, United Way has received pledges from Universal Fibers, BVU, Food City, and the First Bank and Trust Company each in the amount of \$10,000.

WAYS TO DONATE:

- Online: Financial donations can be made to the Fund at www.rwcunitedway.org and by clicking the GIVE tab
- By phone: call 1-276-628-2160 (United Way office). Questions about the Fund can be directed to this number. On the weekend, please call Travis Staton at (276) 791-9366.
- Mobile giving: Make a \$10 donation by texting **SUPPORT** to **27722** standard text messaging rates apply.
- By check: Make out to United Way Disaster Support Fund and mail to United Way of Russell and Washington Counties, P.O. Box 644, Abingdon, VA 24212.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLED VOLUNTEERS

Individuals who want to volunteer, can register with the **United Way** <http://rwcunitedway.org/Volunteer.html> volunteer database.

STAY INFORMED

United Way of Russell and Washington Counties will send updates as new information becomes available. Go to www.rwcunitedway.org for the most recent updates.

We'll continue to keep you updated as we learn more about needs on the ground and ways we can respond both as a system and as caring human beings.