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NEWS RELEASE—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New project seeks to improve emergency preparedness

Lawrence, KS—Knowing where to go for information in an emergency can be overwhelming. A new project will expand the Lawrence Public Library's services to improve emergency preparedness for Douglas County residents, with a special focus on vulnerable populations.

The project, funded by a \$14,000 grant from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, partners the library with the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Douglas County Emergency Management, the University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living and the community working group, Together Prepared.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Enhance access to public health and preparedness information through printed material, staff assistance and the Internet before, during and after a disaster or public health emergency and to host a call center that will be activated in such a crisis.

- Create a Together Prepared Web site that will offer health and safety information and community links with a specific focus on Douglas County's vulnerable populations.
- Pilot an outreach program using the library's mobile van to inform agencies, organizations and residences that serve vulnerable populations on what to do before, during and after a major emergency in Douglas County.

The residents of Coffeyville, Kan. benefited from a similar project in place when floods devastated that community in 2007. Following the flood, the Coffeyville Public Library became a public information and resource center. A library spokesperson stayed in constant contact with city and county authorities to ensure updated information was released. Citizens used the library to get information about applying for assistance and met with agency officials.

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