



**American
Red Cross**

Southern Tier Chapter

American Red Cross
Southern Tier Chapter
620 East Main Street
Endicott, NY 13760
<http://www.southerntierredcross.org>

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: David Currie
Phone: (607) 785-7207
Fax: (607) 785-7216
curried@usa.redcross.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photos Available (see below)

Scorching Pace of Fires Strains Local Red Cross

Endicott, NY (July 30, 2009) – “I couldn’t breathe,” exclaimed Amber McMahon. Ms. McMahon was spending the night at a cousin’s house in Dryden when she received an early morning call informing her that the apartment house she lived in with her mother and brother was on fire. “Even though they told me that they were OK and being transported to the hospital, I went into instant panic mode,” she said.

At around 6:55am, Whitney Point Fire Chief Nick Sculley got the call to respond to a fire in progress on Main Street, across from the Post Office. A three-alarm fire that activated responses from ten separate fire houses and eventually rendered a four apartment house uninhabitable. “Two residents were hanging out of an upstairs window when we arrived,” noted Chief Sculley. Thankfully, there were no fatalities, although in addition to the McMahons, another tenant was hospitalized and her family, a young man, and an elderly woman will all need to find new homes.

Shortly after 7:00am the call for assistance came in to Deputy Director Jason Davis at the Southern Tier Chapter of the Red Cross. The Disaster Action Team was immediately activated. Seven trained volunteers and a Mental Health Counselor were deployed out of the Endicott offices in the Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) and a second vehicle towing a trailer of emergency supplies. Eight residents have been displaced by this fire.

The Southern Tier Chapter has responded to 16 incidents in the month of July. On July 14th, a similar incident affecting ten individuals, including five seniors, occurred in Hancock. So far this month, over 43 people have sought immediate relief assistance which includes food, clothing, medicine and lodging. Appropriate referrals to other agencies for additional assistance are also provided. The aim of the Red Cross is to help these victims take the first steps back on the road to recovery. “The Red Cross was awesome. It is a huge relief to me and my family, and like a great weight is lifted from our shoulders, knowing that there is help for us,” said a tearful McMahon as she left to rejoin her family at the hospital in Binghamton.

The direct financial costs for disaster assistance are already over \$10,000 for July alone, continuing a blistering pace for disaster relief. “It seems too early for us to be making an emergency appeal for donations for disaster,” said Cindy Gordineer CEO, “but we just closed out our fiscal year at a breakeven level and this pattern is highly unusual for a summer month. The costs for responding to disasters include direct relief and the operational support to make sure they can occur – stocked trailers, trained volunteers, equipment and vehicle operation, and staff costs too. Please consider making a donation to the local Red Cross today.” Donations can be made securely online at www.southerntierredcross.org, by phone (607-785-7207), or by check to American Red Cross STC, 620 E Main St, Endicott, NY 13760.

#####

About the American Red Cross Southern Tier Chapter: The Southern Tier Chapter of the American Red Cross celebrates its 102nd year of providing relief to victims of disasters, teaching lifesaving skills, and supporting military members and families. For more information about the Red Cross call 607-785-7207 or visit southerntierredcross.org.



Whitney Point fire on July 30, 2009
Photo by Chuck Haupt

Link to additional photos at <http://picasaweb.google.com/arcstc>