New `First Aid Kit' Helps Americans with Financial Recovery Following Disasters or Emergencies

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KANSAS CITY, Mo., Sep 27, 2004 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- During a disaster, we worry about our families, their safety, and our homes. But how many Americans know which personal financial documents are critical in speeding their disaster recovery, let alone how to store those documents safely?

That's why H&R Block (NYSE:HRB) is joining Operation HOPE, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Citizen Corps, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and USA Freedom Corps in providing the first ever "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit" (EFFAK) to Americans. The Kits will be available on the company's Web site at www.hrblock.com and at select H&R Block offices this coming tax season.

"When families are picking up the pieces of their lives, they shouldn't have to worry about what documents are critical, where those documents are located, or how they can get copies if the documents were destroyed," said Tim Gokey, president of H&R Block Tax Services. "Because of our expertise, we're adding helpful tax information that will enable disaster victims to claim their losses, receive funds quickly, and get on with rebuilding their lives."

The Kit also offers helpful tips, such as keeping an emergency fund of $10 and $20 bills since ATM and credit card access may not be available and the type of items to store in a fireproof safe at home.

"The Emergency Financial First Aid Kit is a simple tool to help Americans minimize the financial impact of a natural disaster or national emergency," said John Bryant, founder, chairman and CEO of Operation HOPE. "We worked in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to create a tool that would help people identify and organize key financial records as well as provide a quick reference to their most important financial documents."

About Operation HOPE

Operation HOPE Inc. (www.operationhope.org) is a national non-profit self-help organization working to bring economic self-sufficiency to inner-city residents and low-wealth communities. With more than $185 million in commitments from its 150 bank and corporate partners for homeownership and small business loans, $117 million in funded loans, and over 500,000 customers served in economic education and services, Operation HOPE is a national leader in providing economic empowerment tools and services. Operation HOPE's Banking on Our Future is the only year-round urban delivery platform for financial literacy education in the nation today, operating in eight states and the District of Columbia. Utilizing more than 1,500 banker-teacher volunteers who serve as HOPE Corps Members, Banking on Our Future has taught over 130,000 students about the basics of banking; how to open and maintain a checking and savings account; the power of credit; and basic investments.

About H&R Block

H&R Block Inc. (www.hrblock.com) is a diversified company with subsidiaries that deliver tax services and financial advice, investment and mortgage products and services, and business accounting and consulting services. The world's largest tax preparation company, H&R Block in fiscal year 2004 served 21.6 million clients at more than 11,000 retail offices worldwide and with software and online services. H&R Block is the only major tax preparation and financial services company that focuses primarily on helping middle-income Americans achieve their financial objectives. Investment services and securities products are offered through H&R Block Financial Advisors Inc., member NYSE, SIPC. H&R Block Inc is not a registered broker-dealer. H&R Block Mortgage Corp. offers retail mortgage products. Option One Mortgage Corp offers wholesale mortgage products and a range of mortgage services. RSM McGladrey Inc. serves mid-sized businesses with accounting, tax and consulting services.

SOURCE: H&R Block

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