



Media Release

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Relief efforts for Joplin drain Food Bank resources

SPRINGFIELD, Mo.—Ozarks Food Harvest has sent more than 100 semi-truckloads—or 1.2 million pounds of product valued at \$2 million—to the Joplin community over the past two months. The Food Bank dispatches 15 truckloads to the Joplin area weekly, while its remaining 300 member food pantries and feeding sites across the Ozarks are seeing demand for their services spike.

“The need is urgent,” said Bart Brown, president/CEO at Ozarks Food Harvest. “We’re asking for community groups to host food drives for all of southwest Missouri. A lot of our pantries are seeing an increased need due to the relocation of those from Joplin, and with more than 9,000 jobs lost in Joplin, we still have a long journey ahead in terms of helping these people get back on their feet.”

A number of The Food Bank’s corporate donors have already responded to Joplin, meaning fewer donations for remaining southwest Missouri pantries in need.

“The corporate environment is such that right now, several of our donor partners are keeping their inventories tight, with transportation costs—and food costs—so high,” Brown said.

This week alone, Ozarks Food Harvest has purchased \$80,000 worth of additional product for its points of distribution in Joplin, who are transitioning from the relief phase to the recovery phase of the disaster. The Food Bank says summer is its slowest food drive season.

“The daily disaster of hunger is even worse when school is out and children are missing meals,” said Brown. “Our agencies are feeling the stalled economic recovery and it’s worse than we thought.”

Those interested in hosting a food or fund drive for Joplin and southwest Missouri food pantries should sign up at ozarksfoodharvest.org/FoodDrive.html or call (417) 865-3411. Volunteers can apply to help process donations at ozarksfoodharvest.org/Volunteer.html.

Most needed items include boxed dinners such as Hamburger Helper; macaroni and cheese; canned fruits and vegetables; protein sources; kitchen staples such as flour, sugar, salt, pepper and other spices; condiments including ketchup and mustard; and paper products including paper plates, napkins, cups and utensils. Toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items are not a food drive priority at this time.

Ozarks Food Harvest is the Feeding America® food bank for southwest Missouri, serving more than 300 hunger relief organizations across 28 Ozarks counties. The Food Bank reaches 20,000 individuals weekly and distributes one million pounds of food monthly. OFH was named the 2011 Small Business of the Year by the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce. Learn more at ozarksfoodharvest.org and at facebook.com/ozarksfoodharvest.

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Transform Hunger into Hope™ at ozarksfoodharvest.org

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