

CHARITY

Giving down, volunteering up

By KEITH MATHENY
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY — Charitable giving decreased in the past year, as a result of both an outpouring of support for the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and a later economic slump, officials at area agencies say. But volunteering is on an upswing.

"We see people kind of assessing their own lives and who they want to be in this world as a result of Sept. 11, and as a result, we saw people much more willing to be involved," said Becky Beauchamp, executive director of the United Way of Northwest Michigan.

Beauchamp said the local United Way fared better than many others throughout the nation, which did not meet their fund-raising goals.

"Here, we exceeded our campaign goal," she said. "But we did notice after Sept. 11, we just kind of began to slow down."

Sue Shoemaker, executive director of the Northern Lower Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross in Gaylord, said the local organization's March fund-raising campaign was down 50 percent from the previous year. The event is the second-largest annual fund-raising source for the 12-county agency, next to the Christmas-New Year's holiday season, she said.

Fund-raising improved this summer, but was still down about 30 percent from the previous year, she said.

Shoemaker noted that many made donations immediately after Sept. 11 to the Red Cross'



Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley

Sara Lee employee Cleve Morris dumps fresh sand into a sand box at the Goodwill Inn during United Way's Day of Caring. Volunteering appears to be up after Sept. 11.

Liberty Fund, designed to assist victims of the terrorist attacks.

"Because people made a donation to the National Red Cross, we've seen a decrease in local donations," she said.

Shoemaker said some may still harbor ill will against the Red Cross because, in the months after the attack, it explored the possibility of using some of the \$998 million in funds the organization raised for purposes other than Sept. 11 victim relief. The Red Cross has since retracted that position.

"A recent report issued by past Sen. George Mitchell has given a complete, clean bill of health to the fund," Shoemaker said. "The funds have been distributed as agreed upon. They are reaching the victims of Sept. 11."

Shoemaker said a copy of the

most recent quarterly report on the Red Cross's Liberty Fund is available at local Red Cross chapters, or via the organization's Web site, www.redcross.org.

Though donations have fallen in the last year, Shoemaker noted an increase in volunteerism after Sept. 11.

"Some of the volunteers have come to the Red Cross as a direct result of reassessing their personal values," she said.

Beauchamp said the local United Way's annual Day of Caring, which involves residents doing volunteer work to improve their communities in various ways, increased from 60 projects a year ago to 80 this year.

Another popular event was the Community Tribute Basket, where people would draw a name of a Sept. 11 victim from a

basket and do local community volunteer work in that person's memory, Beauchamp said.

"Frankly, in the last year we have seen people step forward to volunteer and we wouldn't have predicted that from them," she said.

A national report by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University showed total giving in the United States as of June 2002 at a 2.3 percent decline over that same time last summer. It was the first drop since 1994, which also coincided with another economic slump, Beauchamp said.

After Sept. 11, all American Red Cross records for blood donations were broken. The system was stocked with as much blood as could be collected and stored, Shoemaker said.

Since that time, however, many portions of the country have experienced lower-than-usual donations.

"The real challenge the Red Cross and all blood banks have is to help the general public recognize that every day there is a need to have blood on hand," she said. "Blood has a shelf life of only 42 days, and there are crises every day."

Beauchamp noted that the local United Way's 2001 Day of Caring event occurred on Sept. 11. As the horror of the day's events unfolded, virtually all participants remained doing their community volunteer work, she said.

"You will always remember what you were doing on Sept. 11, and all those wonderful people get to remember that they were caring for their community," she said.

My reaction to the 9-11 attacks were that of both shock and fear ... fear of the unknown. I was attending Bible College in Canada, two hours past the border of Maine, while my family was here in Traverse City. We were not allowed to go across the border for a few days, and I wondered if an all-out war was about to break out in my homeland.

Our students met in prayer that evening. We prayed all night for our country and our leaders that God would give them the strength and wisdom they needed in order to do what needed to be done, and we prayed for the families of the victims. It was hard to be so far from my own family during that time.

Kayla Bryan
Traverse City

I can remember watching the Today show on Sept. 11, 2001, and seeing them interrupt the newscast saying there was a crash at the World Trade Tower, and as I watched it happen again right in front of my eyes I started to cry and ask, why? I started calling family and friends telling them to turn on the news and pray. I then remembered that my mom was about to board a plane in Spokane, Wash., to bring my family from Seattle here for my wedding. I called her and told her NOT to get on the plane. I thought how could this day get any worse?

Then after watching TV for eight hours straight my daughter comes in from playing outside and she had fallen and broken her arm just four days before my wedding. My mom called and said no planes were leaving for at least three days, so her and my Grandma left the family behind to drive back to Michigan.

It was the saddest week of my life, those poor families. Then on Sept. 15, 2001, I got married and in our wedding service we said a prayer for all those who were missing, hurt and deceased. I feel for them all to this day. Even though a good percent of my family couldn't make it to my wedding I knew they were safe and sound.

Toby Lynn Fite
Traverse City

I was at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. We were four months shy of moving to Traverse City.

The first thoughts that came to my mind were my husband and his role as an active duty Air Force member. After being in the military for 14 years, I knew what they did in times of crisis. I was selfishly praying my husband wasn't chosen.

At the same time, I felt a sense of pride knowing that the United States was in good hands with trained and ready-to-fight troops.

Denise Olson
Traverse City

My perspective was and is somewhat unique as it pertains to the events on Sept. 11.

I retired on Sept. 1 at age 60 (as required under federal law) from United Airlines. I was a 757/767 captain based at Chicago O'Hare and regularly flew out of Boston and Newark. I undoubtedly flew the same United aircraft that crashed.

My first reactions were (like most) shock and disbelief. Then my thoughts went to my co-workers who were killed. Did I know them? Were any friends? Then, of course, the horrific collapse of the World Trade Center overshadowed all else. My feelings today are still those of anger and a desire for revenge. Any fundamentalist "religion" that would encourage this violence should be eliminated!

Ted Keskey
Lake Ann

I was attending a business meeting in Iceland. When we found out about the twin towers, we rushed to the television in the lobby of the hotel and watched the second tower fall.

I wanted to go home right then, but the borders to the United States were closed. I called my family in Ann Arbor and Traverse City and told them I did not know when I would see them again.

I was stranded like "Gilligan" on an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean for five tension-filled days.

Vicki Scroggins-Johnson
Ann Arbor

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was just home after working the night shift. I was working at my computer and listening to the radio when they broke in and said something about an airplane hitting the World Trade Center. I turned on the TV and saw the live photos.

A friend of mine is a retired New York firefighter, so I called him and told him to turn on his TV. We talked on the phone on and off the rest of the morning.

I also called my mother on her cell phone. While talking to her, I saw the second plane hit the other tower. I knew this was no accident.

I then called my firefighter friend back and we chatted when the first tower fell. Later I found out that my friend's nephew was one of the firefighters lost when tower two fell.

Michael Dell
Lake Ann

I had just moved to Minneapolis on Sept. 6 and it was my first time living by myself and the first time living in a "big city." I had enjoyed my independence and not having to call my parents every day.

But my mom in Kingsley was the first number I dialed as I woke up to the second tower crashing down. We marveled at how unreal it all was. I didn't panic, but I still bought gas that day, just in case the rumors of \$4.00 a gallon turned out to be true.

Andrew Delancey
Traverse City

I was in my first hour, Spanish class, at Traverse City West Senior High School. I came out of my classroom after the hour was finished and my friend Elliott who was in the class next to mine told me kind of excited like, "A plane crashed into the WTC and the Pentagon was bombed!"

For the rest of the day, most of the teachers left their televisions on to the live broadcasts at the site. It was horrible.

All I could think about was, "Does this mean war? Will my family in the military have to fight?" I was so scared.

My mother was trying to find a flight to visit my sister in Texas who was expecting a baby, but thank God she didn't get a flight that day. I called my mother scared out of my mind, quivering with terrifying thoughts. I went back to class and watched more about the second plane to hit the towers.

Practices and all after-school events were canceled for the day and we all went home to our families. When I arrived home, I learned of something on a happy note — my sister had delivered my nephew, James Edward. There were some complications with the birth including an emergency c-section, but everything turned out fine and now he will be turning 1 year old on Sept. 11, 2002.

Holly Brosier
Lake Ann

Security beefed up at bridge, Big Rock

By KEITH MATHENY
Record-Eagle staff writer

CHARLEVOIX — Two of northern Michigan's most attractive targets for a terrorist attack — the decommissioning Big Rock Point nuclear power plant near Charlevoix and the Mackinac Bridge — are, not coincidentally, among the most secure facilities in the region, officials said.

"They are very difficult targets," said Kathy Simmons, emergency management coordinator for Charlevoix, Cheboygan and Emmet counties.

"With the security at both of those areas, it would be very difficult for anyone to try to do anything at either of those sites," she said.

After 35 years of operation, Big Rock, one of the nation's oldest nuclear power plants, shut down in 1997. Nearly 59 metric tons of nuclear waste are still stored on the facility's grounds. The waste is in the process of being moved to eight concrete-and-steel casks on Big Rock property. It will eventually be moved to a national repository at Yucca Mountain, Nev., when that facility is ready in about 10 years.

Big Rock spokesman Tim Petrosky said security was high at the facility prior to Sept. 11, but that event led to large-scale security enhancements, both at Big Rock and at other nuclear facilities throughout the country.

"We have increased security personnel," he said. "We have increased the physical barriers at the plant, and the amount of patrols. We have pushed security further out from the plant."

"Those are the things that are visible. In addition to that, there are many things that are not visible."

Petrosky declined to discuss further specifics, citing security concerns.

Big Rock officials maintain constant communication with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to ensure plant safety "and to help determine possible risks out there," Petrosky said.

POSSIBLE TERROR TARGETS



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

Security checks out vehicles recently at the Mackinac Bridge.

Nuclear power plants "are among the most secure industrial sites in the world," Petrosky said. An attack method similar to the one terrorists used on Sept. 11 would not be effective on a nuclear facility, he said.

"Because of a nuclear plant's footprint, it's a very small target," he said. "It would be very, very difficult for an airliner to hit it, and then very difficult for an airliner to penetrate the barriers in place."

Security capabilities are also being upgraded since Sept. 11 at the Mackinac Bridge, the Western Hemisphere's largest suspension bridge.

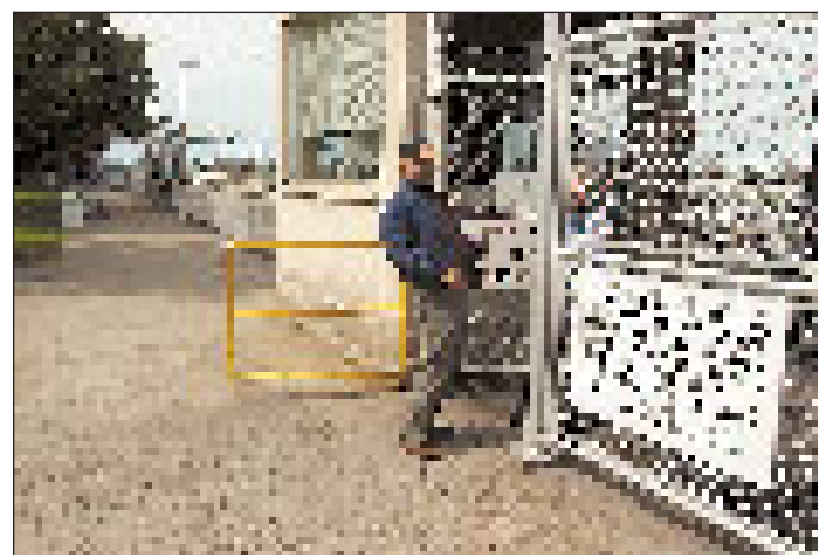
"We've got to think through differently than we ever did before, and as a result, we have a higher level of security," said Hank Lotoszinski, outgoing administrator of the Mackinac Bridge, who is leaving the position this month.

Officials are installing cameras throughout the bridge span to better monitor traffic and other activity. But Lotoszinski noted that plan has been in the works since 1997.

"We're in the process of installing hardware on the bridge this fall and next spring," he said.

The National Guard, as it has for years, provides security at the bridge during the annual Labor Day Bridge Walk, which attracts tens of thousands of visitors.

Lotoszinski declined to get into specifics, but said bridge securi-



Security at the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie has been fortified to deal with possible terror attacks.

ty involves coordination with local and state law enforcement authorities, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Depending upon the situation, we are concerned about land, water and air traffic in the area," he said. "Especially during times of alert, we're cognizant of it, and monitor it accordingly."

Terrorism training had always been a small part of emergency planning for the bridge, but not thought of as a potential reality, such as a possible chemical spill or other type of accident, Lotoszinski said.

"With that happening, the training had more meaning for us," he said. "Those are things you never really thought would happen. On Sept. 11, it did."

