

## **2-1-1 TEXAS/UNITED WAY HELPLINE ASSISTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY**

The Governor's Office, the Department of State Health Services, UT Center for Space Research and Texas 2-1-1 Information Referral Network have worked together to develop a program to better assist Texans who will require transportation or special assistance during an evacuation. The intent of this effort is to encourage individual citizens to identify themselves and simply acknowledge that they need assistance in evacuation.

The state has created a transportation assistance registry to collect information about Texans who will need special assistance during an evacuation. Citizens with special needs can call 2-1-1, and the information they share will be provided to local emergency officials who will follow-up and ensure their safe evacuation is coordinated.

The registry was unveiled on May 1, 2006. Utility billing statements in hurricane evacuation zones will carry a simple public awareness message – in both English and Spanish – asking recipients to call 2-1-1 if they believe they need assistance with evacuation. Messages will be provided in utility bills through the end of hurricane season, which ends November 30.

The Health and Human Services Commission, 2-1-1 Information Referral Network has trained operators to begin collecting and entering transportation needs into the Transportation Assistance Registry on May 1, 2006. Information collected will include location information, medical needs, whether family pet transportation will be needed, and other emergency contact information. Database information will be fully secure and only accessible to emergency officials.

