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Letter Carriers, High Plains Food Bank to help *Stamp Out Hunger* Nation's largest one-day food drive set for May 12

AMARILLO – On Saturday, May 12, Panhandle-area letter carriers will again help Stamp Out Hunger! across America with your help in order to provide assistance to the rapidly increasing number of Americans who are struggling with hunger.

Now in its 18th year, the Stamp Out Hunger! effort is the nation's largest single-day food drive. In 2012, drive organizers hope to exceed last year's total of 70 million pounds of donated food, as well as surpass one billion pounds of food collected over the history of the drive.

Last year, letter carriers across Amarillo collected over 20,000 pounds of food and product for the High Plains Food Bank. The goal this year is to raise 30,000 pounds of food for those in need across the Texas Panhandle.

Supporting the drive this year are Campbell Soup Company, the U.S. Postal Service, Feeding America, Valpak, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, the AFL-CIO and United Way Worldwide.

The local branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) #1037 will be collecting food in Amarillo, Canyon, Dimmitt, Dumas, Friona, Hereford, Shamrock and Tulia.

To help Stamp Out Hunger! in the Texas Panhandle this year, simply leave the bag they received in their mailbox with non-perishable foods - such as canned vegetables, boxed dinners (such as

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macaroni & cheese, Hamburger Helper, cereal), rice, pinto beans, paper goods (such as paper towels, toilet paper) and personal hygiene items (such as shampoo, body soap, toothbrushes) - by your mailbox before 9 a.m. on May 12. Please no glass or breakable food items.

Food items should be in non-breakable containers, such as boxes and cans. Local letter carriers will be collecting donations from homes across Amarillo and delivering them to The High Plains Food Bank.

The effects of the recession and unemployment rates are also having a dramatic impact on the agencies that help the hungry. In a recent survey conducted by Feeding America, the nation's leading domestic-hunger-relief organization, its 203 food bank members consistently reported increased demand for emergency food assistance, ranging from five to 150 percent. Today, food banks are struggling to meet the surging needs of their clients.

Food banks are also notoriously empty during summer months, having exhausted the supply of donations received from food drives conducted during the holidays that are then distributed during spring. Summer donations are even more critical since many children in need no longer have the benefit of their school lunch program.

For more information about the annual Stamp Out Hunger! effort, ask your letter carrier or visit either www.helpstampouthunger.com, www.facebook.com/StampOutHunger or follow the drive at www.twitter.com/StampOutHunger.

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