*“Blaze Tracker” features give users warning, alerts and fire information.*

As dry, windy conditions persist and fires break out across the state, the American Red Cross has released its official Wildfire App. This free app–available in English or Spanish–puts lifesaving information right in the hands of people in wildfire prone areas. It is available for both iPhone and Android platforms.

“The Wildfire App gives residents of Nebraska and Southwest Iowa instant access to our ‘Blaze Tracker’ features so they can make critical decisions that can save lives.” said Tina Labellarte, Chief Executive Officer of the Nebraska/SW Iowa Region. “Users can receive notification of wildfire risk and activity within 100 miles of locations that matter most to them – so they can help protect their loved ones and their property.”

The Wildfire App includes the “Blaze Tracker” trio of features-which can be customized for alerts specific to locations where they live, travel or have loved ones:

• “Blaze Warnings” which let users see areas where NOAA has issued warnings that conditions are favorable for potential wildfires;

• “Blaze Alerts” inform users when a wildfire has begun within 100 miles of any locations monitored; and

• “Blaze Path” from Inciweb.org which provides users with a current view of an existing wildfire’s perimeter, how it has spread and the fire’s current location when available.

Additional Features Include:

• One touch “I’m safe” messaging that allows users to broadcast reassurance to family and friends via social media outlets that they are out of harm’s way;

• Locations of open Red Cross shelters;

• Preloaded content that gives users instant access to critical action steps, even without mobile connectivity;

• Toolkit with flashlight, strobe light and audible alarm; and

• Badges users can earn through interactive quizzes and share on social networks.

The Wildfire App can be found in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store for Android by searching for American Red Cross. Apps can help prepare people for disasters, but they are not a substitute for training. Red Cross First Aid and CPR/AED training empowers people to know how to respond to emergencies in case advanced medical help is delayed.

Approximately 300,000 acres in Nebraska have been damaged by fires this season. More than 1,600 people have turned to the Red Cross for critical water, food, shelter, and support. More than 7,500 meals and snacks have been served since the beginning of the summer.

This year, the Red Cross has launched 11 wildfire relief operations spanning 10 states. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, as of Oct. 4, wildfires have burned 8.8 million acres in the United States this year.