



Illinois Department of **Natural Resources**

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IDNR Launches “Target Hunger Now!” in Southern Illinois

Program will provide food banks with venison and fish for families in need

MARION, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is bringing its new and popular humanitarian program “Target Hunger Now!” to southern Illinois to help feed those in need. “Target Hunger Now!” provides food banks throughout the state with venison donated by Illinois hunters and soon, with fish from Illinois waterways.

The “Target Hunger Now!” (THN) program is serving protein rich venison chili to dozens of children, adults and families today at the Marion Ministerial Alliance Soup Kitchen in Marion. THN first kicked off in September and has provided meals to more than 700 people in several communities in the Chicagoland area.

“The ‘Target Hunger Now’ program was so successful on its first few missions that we couldn’t wait to bring it to new areas of our state,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “Over the last few weeks, the response from other communities interested in the program has been overwhelming and we are happy to do all we can to help those who need it.”

IDNR is coordinating the program to encourage hunters to donate whole deer for processing into ground venison. The IDNR will also be working with commercial fishing operations to provide abundant Mississippi River Asian carp for processing into high-protein, ready-to-prepare servings later this year.

Partners with the IDNR on “Target Hunger Now!” include the Illinois Hunger Coalition, the Beta Club of Illinois, the Illinois Conservation Foundation, Feeding Illinois and the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger program. Kroger grocery store and Larry’s House of Cakes, both located in Marion, donated items for today’s lunch.

“‘Target Hunger Now’ is a great way to help those in need especially during these tough economic times. We’re seeing an increase of middle class people that are struggling to feed their families and are turning to food pantries and soup kitchens for help,” said Mary Ellen Abbott, Southern Region Field Director, Illinois Hunger Coalition.

Assistance to food banks is much needed in Illinois. Statistics from the USDA suggest nearly a half-million children in the state are in households facing food insecurity. More than 1.6 million individuals and 756,000 households participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in February 2010, an increase of 14 percent from last year. Nearly 2 million Illinois children were enrolled in the National School Lunch Program during the last school year.

The IDNR hopes thousands of pounds of fish can be processed regularly along with the distribution of 100,000 pounds of donated venison this year as part of “Target Hunger Now!”

Individuals, companies or others interested in supporting the program can contact the IDNR at 217/785-0075.