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**For immediate release**

**Ontario residents are not well prepared for emergencies and disasters:  
One of findings of report on August 14, 2003 blackout**

TORONTO, ONTARIO - With the first anniversary of the August 14, 2003 blackout taking place this weekend, the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) today released the findings of its research paper, *Emergency Management and the August 14, 2003 Blackout*. The report, authored by Dr. Brenda L. Murphy, of Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus, outlines the results of a 1,203 person, general population survey conducted in February 2004 regarding Ontario residents' emergency management perspectives and activities pertaining to the electricity blackout.

Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) said, "The anniversary of the blackout reminds Ontarians of the significance of taking simple proactive emergency preparedness measures to mitigate the effects of any type of risk event or natural disaster." Kovacs added, "Dr. Murphy's research paper provides important recommendations in this regard."

The blackout left fifty million Canadian and American citizens without electricity, with some going without power for over 48 hours. In Ontario, over 9 million people were affected by the power outage.

Dr. Brenda Murphy said, "A key finding of this research indicated that emergency preparedness is not a high priority for most people. For instance, although residents were generally aware that households share a significant part of the responsibility for emergency preparedness, most had the constituents of an emergency preparedness (EP) kit, but had not assembled them into one package."

Highlights of the conclusions and recommendations of Dr. Murphy's research paper, which was co-sponsored by Wilfrid Laurier University, are:

- Ontario residents are not well prepared for emergencies and disasters
- Information about emergency preparedness must be provided via multiple sources and delivery methods

- Especially in quiet, non-crisis periods, all levels of government must continue to contribute to, and upgrade, their proactive emergency management
- People involved in a crisis situation are both victims and responders. One of the resources they use in a crisis is their social network of relationships
- All Ontario residents need to improve their emergency preparedness.

Dr. Murphy continued, “The research also indicated that respondents believe that both local and provincial governments should do more to effectively prepare communities for emergencies. One important opportunity to ensure continuing interest in emergency management and to increase our resilience to emergencies and disasters is to support government agency and research institute initiatives related to disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness.”

The complete report of Dr. Murphy's findings is available under “Publications” on the ICLR website – [www.ICLR.org](http://www.ICLR.org)

Established in 1998 by Canada’s property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR’s research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR’s work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

For further information, please contact: Glenn McGillivray, Managing Director, ICLR, tel. 416/364-8677, ext. 3216, fax 416/364-5889, [gmcgillivray@iclr.org](mailto:gmcgillivray@iclr.org)