



## **Independence and peace of mind for Huron North Shore Communities, thanks to VPR expansion**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 16, 2019**

**Sault Ste. Marie-** The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre is expanding its free registry for individuals at greater risk during an emergency to include communities along the North Shore from Garden River to Killarney.

The Vulnerable Person's Registry (VPR) is a free, voluntary and confidential registry that provides key information (vulnerabilities) to local Emergency Management Coordinators in order to improve safety during an emergency.

You qualify for the VPR if you live in an eligible area without 24-hour support and experience severe difficulty with any of the following: mobility, vision, hearing, developmental, cognitive, or mental health, or if individuals require electricity for life sustaining equipment such as oxygen, dialysis & ventilators.

"This is a terrific service for people who have family members with vulnerabilities or difficulties. We want families, local health professionals, and individuals that identify as having vulnerabilities be aware of this service. It allows for more independence and peace of mind in our communities," says Peter Bruijns, Executive Director of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre.

How it works:

- Individuals can confidentially register on the VPR (or they can register a family member)
- In the event of a large-scale emergency, Emergency Management Coordinators will receive a notification indicating which residences have a vulnerable person, and the key information they should know to help improve their strategy.

"I recognize the importance of a Vulnerable Persons Registry in the time of a real emergency. This free, voluntary and confidential registry allows individuals and families to register their loved ones or the person they're caring for just by filling out the online form. I would encourage everyone to use this valuable and possibly lifesaving service if they have a vulnerable person in their life." Leslie Gamble, Chair of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board.

"The VPR will ensure that in times of crisis (i.e. fire, flood) those who have medical restrictions are prioritized for evacuation purposes. It also provides people with peace of mind in times of crisis," says Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services Sudbury Manitoulin DSB.

The Vulnerable Person's Registry (VPR) has been active in Sault Ste. Marie for 8 years and was inspired in memory of Lewis Wheelen. The former Sault resident was involved in an accident in 2001 as a summer student clearing brush near electrical lines that left him severely burned, wheelchair bound, and reliant on air conditioning to control his body temperature. In 2003, Ontario experienced one of the largest blackouts in North America. Lewis lived in southern Ontario and outside temperatures exceeded 32 degrees. His portable phones were useless during the power outage as his family frantically tried to reach him. His personal support worker was not scheduled to return until the following day. Lewis was without air conditioning for over 22 hours and tragically passed away at the age of 21.

The VPR is a tool that aims to prevent anything like that from happening in our communities and gives people the opportunity to identify as somebody that requires additional assistance during emergencies. We encourage people to view our map online to confirm their eligibility, register themselves, or to register a loved one who fit the criteria.

Visit [www.soovpr.com](http://www.soovpr.com) and register online, call the VPR Coordinator, or print the registration form and mail to:

Vulnerable Person's Registry  
99 Foster Drive, Level Six  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON  
P6A 5X6

If you have questions about the Vulnerable Person's Registry, please contact:

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### **About the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre:**

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) is a non-profit organization established in 1999 to function as a catalyst for economic development and diversification in the information technology and science knowledge-based sectors in Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma region. SSMIC's mission is to drive business growth, facilitate research and commercialize innovation in globally significant areas of science and technology through partnerships, expert advice, community development, business incubation, youth outreach and sector development activities.

### **About Acorn Information Solutions**

Acorn Information Solutions (AIS) (formerly known as the Community Geomatics Centre) is a

division of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre. AIS is dedicated to promoting and establishing the means to share data, knowledge and tools among organizations to create healthier, safer and more prosperous communities. Declared to be the most comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) solution in the world, AIS is the first true Information Utility and is the best example of leveraging public data for public good in North America.