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Taking the Boy Scout motto of “Be Prepared” to heart, the city of Houston launched a project Friday to identify residents who will need special help during a disaster and those able to provide that help.

The city is including a special needs and emergency volunteer survey with water bills sent to southeast Houston residents in the next few days. Arrangements also are being made to get the survey to those living in multifamily dwellings such as apartment buildings, who may not receive water bills. “To my knowledge, this is the first time in the nation that such a survey has been taken to look at a citizen’s ability to assist the city or government in taking care of our responsibilities during the time of a disaster,” said **Mayor Lee Brown**. A southeast Houston Super Neighborhood council proposed the survey. The survey will be mailed to 120,000 residents in 27 zip codes in an area ranging from Clear Lake to downtown Houston to Fort Bend County. City officials and civic groups also want to identify medical professionals and residents with special training, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, willing to volunteer in an emergency. The goal is to be better prepared for the next emergency. The survey is part of a plan to improve emergency readiness at the grassroots level and to increase civic club membership citywide. “And save lives,” said Charles X. White, president of the Sunnyside/South Park Super Neighborhood Council. The group began planning the project more than a year ago, White said. “This is a call to action,” he said, noting Tropical Storm Allison and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. “Both of these acts, one natural, one man-made, have produced the same need – the need to be safe and feel safe in our homes.” White encouraged residents living in the service area to participate in the project. The group plans to go door-to-door and to churches and schools to promote the effort. Among others participating are the city Planning Department, Reliant Energy, the Red Cross, the Houston Independent School District and Charity Productions, a nonprofit social service agency. For more information, contact White at 713-734-3599.