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Media Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Firefighters, Law Enforcement, and Author Stephen King Join Forces to Support Suncoast Communities Blood Bank Boots vs. Badges Annual Competition Kicks Off July 12

Sarasota, FL – First responders from Sarasota and Manatee Counties are gearing up for the 6th Annual Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB), **Boots vs. Badges** blood drive competition. Seventeen agencies from Manatee and Sarasota Counties will participate in this year's event, which runs July 12 through August 2. The goal is to raise 500 units of blood during the friendly competition that pits law enforcement against firefighters.

In conjunction with Boots vs. Badges, SCBB will debut a series of public service announcements by the author, Stephen King. King taped the series at an SCBB donor center this spring, where he regularly donates. After being hit by a van in 12 years ago, he credits blood donors and first responders with saving his life. "In 1999, people I'd never met helped save my life. I'm a blood donor now and I give as often as I can at Suncoast Communities Blood Bank," said King. Some of King's best known books include, "The Shining", "The Green Mile" and "Carrie". Anyone who donates blood at an official Boots vs. Badges blood drive will be eligible to win an autographed, hard-bound edition of "The Shining". A list of official drives is available at www.scbb.org, or by calling 1-866-97-BLOOD.

To kick off the competition, SCBB will host an open house on Tuesday, July 12 from 11:00 am. - 1:00 pm, at the Sarasota donor center, located at 1760 Mound Street, Sarasota. Representatives and officials from the various agencies will be on hand for the opening ceremony at 11:30 am. The public is invited to attend and anyone who donates blood will be served lunch, courtesy of Word of Mouth and Firehouse Subs.

"During the summer months blood donations in our area can drop by as much as 15%," said Kevin Lindberg, Chief Executive Officer of SCBB. Several factors are attributed to the drop according to Lindberg. "Our high schools are not in session, our winter residents are gone, and many families take vacations during the summer. We still need to collect 100 units of blood a day, 365 days a year, to supply our local hospitals. Boots vs. Badges is a great way to

remind the community that the need is constant, no matter what time of year it is," he said.

The competition is light-hearted, but it raises awareness about the vital role first responders and blood donors play in the community. "First responders put their lives on the line every day. We can't say enough about their skills, and dedication to their profession, said Teresa Rawe, DO, Director of Emergency Services for Manatee Healthcare System. "We rely on first responders for their life-saving skills, and we depend on SCBB for our supply of blood in emergency situations. A few minutes can mean the difference between life and death," said Rawe.

Up for grabs is a coveted traveling trophy. The winner of the 2010 campaign was the Boots team. The Badges team took the title last year. SCBB serves the hospitals from Bradenton to North Port as well as Bayflite 2 emergency helicopter transport. The true winners of the competition are those patients in Manatee and Sarasota County who rely on lifesaving blood products.

About SCBB - Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization providing a reliable supply of safe blood products and services to our community for over 60 years. SCBB provides 100% of the blood products and services for Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System, Manatee Memorial Hospital, Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Sarasota, Doctors Hospital of Sarasota, DeSoto Memorial Hospital and Bayflite 2. SCBB is recognized as a distinguished provider with outstanding customer service and the ability to provide rare blood services onsite. For SCBB donor locations and more information, visit www.scbb.org or call 1-866-97-BLOOD.

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