Northeast Colorado Health Department has a gift that could save your life, and it's giving it away for free this holiday season.

On Dec. 5 NCHD will begin taking entries for someone to win a free 72-hour emergency preparedness kit. The kit, which is valued at over $200, includes items that will help get a family of four through an emergency or disaster for a minimum of 72 hours, including personal hygiene items, medical supplies, miscellaneous tools and safety items, as well as food and water.

The grand prize winner's name will be drawn on Monday, Jan. 5, along with 15 other winners that will receive a smaller, individual kit.

"We're hoping this drawing gets people thinking about the importance of 72-hour kits and maybe give them some ideas of how to put together their own," said Mike Burnett, NCHD's regional training coordinator.

The promotion will run in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security's Resolve to be Ready campaign, which is intended to remind Americans the New Year is a perfect time to make a resolution to be ready for all types of emergencies, from natural disasters to terrorist attacks.

"The federal government has stressed their position that individual readiness is a civic responsibility," said Burnett. "They have encouraged people across the nation to take steps that will greatly improve their ability to survive and recover from all types of emergencies, including making a kit.

"The idea is that every family should be prepared to sustain themselves for up to three days after an emergency without assistance. In doing so, those families are helping to free up resources to those that are unable to help themselves."

According to Burnett, the entry forms contain three general questions about individual preparedness and in order for the entry to be valid, those questions need to be answered.

"We're trying to capture a general idea of how prepared the people in our health district are, according to the county they live in," said Burnett. "We're hoping this data will be able to tell us where we may need to target more education, or how far along some of our residents are in their planning efforts."

Burnett said while the items in the kit will be displayed at NCHD's Sterling office, entry boxes will be kept at all of NCHD's locations listed below:

—Logan County: 700 Columbine St., Sterling;

—Morgan County: 228 W. Railroad Ave., Fort Morgan;

—Phillips County: 127 E. Denver, Suite C, Holyoke;

—Sedgwick County: 118 W. 3rd, Julesburg;

—Washington County: 150 Ash, Akron;

—Yuma County: 529 N. Albany St., Suite 1120, Yuma.

In addition, entry forms can also be downloaded from NCHD's website at www.nchd.org and mailed to 700 Columbine St. Sterling, CO 80751, attention Deanna Herbert. Limit one entry per household, NCHD employees and their immediate families are excluded from entering.

For more information concerning this promotion, contact Deanna Herbert, NCHD's public information officer, 970-522-3741 x257.