

Mission New Mexico's Impact



NMDR Responds to Dog Head Fire

New Mexico Disaster Relief is a volunteer relief organization that responds to many kinds of disasters and offers a variety of services. NMDR cooperates on a national scale with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, the Department of Homeland Security, the Red Cross and other agencies. All NMDR volunteers are trained for their tasks and must keep their training current to continue serving. Though very practical in the services offered to disaster victims, every deployment has a very spiritual objective in mind, too. Disaster victims need Jesus, just like everyone else.

The call came. The American Red Cross asked New Mexico Baptist Disaster Relief to deploy a field kitchen and volunteers in response to the Dog Head Fire in central New Mexico. In a message emailed to active Disaster Relief volunteers around the state, Cricket Pairett, Ministry Assistant to the Missions Mobilization Team, informed volunteers that the Red Cross had opened a shelter at the Los Vecinos Community Center in Tijeras.

One of NMBDR's feeding units was deployed to serve food to workers and evacuees. John Torrison, Director of Missions for the Central Baptist Association, served as the "Blue Hat" leader for the feeding team. They called for NMDR volunteers to serve meals from Friday, June 17, throughout the weekend. This need continued past the weekend as the fire continued to grow.

Weeks after the fire had passed from headlines, New Mexico Disaster Relief continued on the scene helping homeowners cope with the aftermath.

NMDR deployed new resources for clean up of the fire's devastation: an incident management team, clean up team, heavy equipment (a skid steer), NM RC002 (the clean up trailer from Socorro), feeding team, chaplains, communications and NMSH001 (the Pecos Valley Association shower and laundry trailer). The deployment was anticipated to be a two-week project involving 24 NMDR volunteers.

Eight private home sites had been assessed for clean up by NMDR. Those homes were completely lost. In addition to cleaning up the sites, clean up teams were available to sift through the ash and debris for salvageable items upon homeowner request. Teams also sorted the debris into piles of ash, metal, wood, etc. When completed, if the home was built on a slab, teams left the slab completely clean.

The operating team, feeding team, shower unit, laundry unit, incident management and communication teams operated out of the Torreon Fire Department and Community Center. Clean up teams, the heavy equipment team, and another communication team operated on Aceves Road at actual home sites. Chaplains were embedded within the teams.

New Mexico Baptists providing leadership to the second wave of relief efforts were Jerry Minor, crew boss, incident command; Cathy Pennington, crew boss, feeding unit; Kathy Sloan, cooking boss; Richard Hernandez, crew boss, clean up team; Norm Riggins, crew boss, communications team; and Larry Schmidt, heavy equipment operator.

All services were provided to fire victims at no cost, thanks to the generosity of New Mexico Baptists.

Did the NMDR responses to the Dog Head fire make an eternal difference? Several homeowners, through conversations with team owners, heard presentations of the Gospel and made decisions to follow Jesus as their Savior.



Mission New Mexico funds from New Mexico Baptists support New Mexico Disaster Relief operations. In coordination with DR volunteers in the state's various associations, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico's Missions Mobilization Team provides office support to NMDR's relief efforts, training, and other activities. All relief funds are provided through the Mission New Mexico State Missions Offering.

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