



The Salvation Army

Emergency Disaster Services

Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network



14 December 2017

The Salvation Army Responds To The Lilac Wildfire In California

Amateur Radio Operators Active in Latest Round of California Wildfires



San Diego, CA, (12/10/2017) – The Salvation Army responded to the Lilac Fire in North County. The Lilac Fire has been held at 4,100 acres burned and is now 97% contained. The fire destroyed 157 structures and damaged another 64. The hundreds of people who were evacuated are now being allowed to return.

The Salvation Army was on high alert since the beginning of fires and ramped up response as needs arose. The response began on Thursday, 07 December, providing water, food, ice, shovels, rakes, tubs, eye hooks, phone chargers and spiritual support at the Del Mar Fairgrounds evacuation center for large animals. The fairgrounds held hundreds of evacuated large animals and their owners.

After seeing the need, The Salvation Army expanded its outreach and response to volunteers, evacuees and first responders, and continued to serve those affected by the fire for as long as necessary. Fire survivors received Salvation Army Thrift Store vouchers to purchase clothes, furniture, dishware, and other household items.

The Salvation Army participated at a Local Assistance Center (LAC) at the Vista Library on Monday, December 11 to serve those affected by the fire. Those affected by the fires and in need of services could come to the LAC and meet a network of organizations, offering a variety of services.

As a participant in the LAC, The Salvation Army provided temporary housing assistance, thrift store vouchers, emergency food assistance, Walmart gift cards and Home Depot gift cards.

Los Angeles, CA (12/11/2017) - The massive and barely contained Thomas Fire in Southern California has consumed some 242,500 acres. It is only 30% contained and has caused residents in fire-threatened areas to evacuate.

Ventura County Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS)/ARES activated a week ago to support four American Red Cross shelters, providing communications between shelters. ARRL Ventura County District Emergency Coordinator Rob Hanson (W6RH) says that radio amateurs also have deployed to the Ventura County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Santa Barbara Section Manager Jim Fortney (K6IYK) told ARRL, an Amateur Radio digital MESH network (ARDN) has been live streaming images from several sites, as long as the network remains up. “Loss of primary power has required using the solar power backup but, unfortunately, the heavy smoke has made that backup less than fully reliable,” Fortney said. In addition some sites are down because of power outages, and at least one hilltop site was overrun by fire.

Rich Beisigl (N6NKJ) reported that the Fallbrook Amateur Radio Group and other groups in North County (San Diego) are providing communication at some evacuation centers, and the American Red Cross has activated its Amateur Radio group. He said a group in Carlsbad also was providing shelter communication support.

In addition to power loss to repeater sites, solar panels charging off-grid batteries have been affected by the huge plumes of smoke blocking the sun.

ARRL Los Angeles Section Manager Diana Feinberg (AI6DF) said little official use of Amateur Radio was made during the fires in her Section. “All city and county governmental radio systems, commercial cellphone networks, and landline phone systems operated normally throughout the three fires in Los Angeles County, with just a few minor power outages of short duration.” At one point, the ARES-LAX Northwest District was very briefly in standby mode when it was thought that power might become intermittent at a hospital in the Santa Clarita area. Feinberg said the City of Los Angeles Fire Department ACS opened a net for any traffic resulting from the small Skirball Fire, which claimed a half-dozen expensive homes and shut down a major freeway during the morning commute.

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Walmart supports Salvation Army Disaster Relief Efforts In Puerto Rico



West Nyack, NY (12/13/2017) - In support of the Salvation Army, the Walmart Foundation has donated \$750,000 to the relief effort in the Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands, significantly affected by Hurricane Maria and Irma. Funds will be used this season for feeding, relief supplies, and logistics. For Hurricane Maria, which obliterated much of Puerto Rico's infrastructure, The Salvation Army and Walmart Foundation have come together to meet the essential needs, and help kick-start the communities in need on the path to recovery.

"Thanks to key donors and the Walmart Foundation, we are able to distribute the essential resources that sustain families, and help them towards recovery—both at home and in their spirit," said Michael Orfitelli, Eastern Territory Disaster Coordinator.

"In thousands of communities across the country, families are still feeling the impact of the hurricanes. Like the Salvation Army, Walmart is a part of these communities. We are proud to invest in the continued work of recovery and rebuilding," said Julie Gehrki, vice president of programs for Walmart.

With a permanent footprint in the affected communities, The Salvation Army Disaster Services will continue to provide assistance until the need is met, and beyond.

Operation Santa Claus In St. Michael, AK



St. Michael, Alaska (12/12/2017) - The Salvation Army continued its over 50 year partnership with the Alaska National Guard for Operation Santa Claus, a tradition that brings Christmas joy to children

living in Alaska's rural communities. This year, the Western Territory Commanders joined Santa, Mrs. Claus and about 30 elves on the excursion to St. Michael, Alaska.

An island community, St. Michael lies 125 miles southeast of Nome and has a population of about 400, mainly Yup'ik Eskimo. Residents were ready for Santa and his helpers, especially the village children who eagerly awaited their time with Santa. "This may be their only opportunity, so really you know they're excited," said Jenni Ragland, Salvation Army Service Extension and EDS Director and chair for the Operation Santa advisory committee. She noted that unless they travel to cities like Anchorage or Fairbanks, most of the kids in Alaska's remote communities won't have the chance to visit Santa.

The team arrived on an Alaska Air National Guard new HC-130J Combat King II aircraft from the 211th Rescue Squadron. After the plane landed, community volunteers helped transport gifts and treats to the local all-grades school, where the Christmas event took place. School Principal Jon Wehde said the community had been looking forward to Operation Santa for months. Children shared their wish lists with Santa, and everyone received presents, books, school supplies and ice cream sundaes from Tastee Freez. Gifts included hand-knit hats made by a women's group in Florida who worked on them even during the hurricanes.

Commissioner Jolene K. Hodder, Territorial President of Women's Ministries, said the experience reminded her of a quote from Desmond Tutu: "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." She acknowledged, "The Army would not be able to serve those in need in these tiny remote villages without military transport and without the other partnering organizations," she said. "All working together, Christmas miracles were made possible for God's children in St. Michaels."

Alaska ARES also conducted their annual 'Tracking Santa' SET on 09 December 2017. They used a combination of Pactor, RMS (WinLink) and TelNet for the exercise. SATERN operator and International SATERN SSB Net Manager Ken Gilliland (AG6SV) participated in the exercise.

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