

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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County lending support to hurricane relief effort Special relief fund established through www.sbcounty.gov website

A special Red Cross fund established by the County of San Bernardino is one of several ways the county and its employees have found to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

"This catastrophe has brought out the best in the county family, which has a habit of uniting and making a positive difference in times of need," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus, who kicked off the county's monetary assistance drive with a \$5,000 donation earlier today. Mr. Postmus also issued a memorandum to all County employees today encouraging their participation in the relief effort.

Some county employees have already made their way to the disaster area to help with the rescue and recovery effort, and many more employees are poised to travel to the Gulf Coast and surrounding regions either in their official capacity as county employees or as volunteers for the American Red Cross and other relief agencies.

Other county employees have banded together or acted on their own to gather money or supplies in an outpouring of compassion. Employees of the county's Transitional Assistance Department alone have raised \$2,494 to donate to the American Red Cross, including \$735 from the employees of the Redlands TAD office.

Various relief agencies are advising that donating money is the best way for most people to lend support to hurricane victims. For that reason, the county has established a special Red Cross fund to funnel tax-deductible donations directly to recovery efforts. Employees and county residents alike are encouraged to donate through a link and instructions posted on the county's web site, www.sbcounty.gov.

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According to the Red Cross, 100 percent of the money donated through this fund will be sent along to the national Red Cross organization and used exclusively to assist hurricane victims.

“With approximately 17,000 employees, the County of San Bernardino is by far the Inland Empire’s largest workforce,” Chairman Postmus pointed out. “A group of this size, combined with the county’s approximately 2 million residents, can clearly make a difference by combining their efforts through this fund.”

Before the fund was established, groups of county employees on their own began pooling their resources to help with the relief effort. Meanwhile, rescue and recovery agencies have tapped into the county’s pool of trained and talented experts to assist in the effort. A County Fire Battalion Chief has already been sent to the disaster zone to provide assistance with a mutual aid effort, and other County Fire personnel are expected to be called into action in the near future.

Teams of doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists and other health-care professionals from Arrowhead Regional Medical Center have been asked to be at the ready to staff mobile hospitals that are being established in communities near the Gulf Coast. Two ARMC nurses and an administrator departed for the disaster zone this morning, and an ARMC pharmacist plans to travel tomorrow.

Chairman Postmus, who met earlier today with a Red Cross official, is continuing to discuss with other County leaders additional ways the County can help the relief effort.

“The county will do everything it can to help the victims of this disaster,” said Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Paul Biane. “Our county has faced natural disasters, and we may face them again the future. People have come to us in our time of need. This is an opportunity to reciprocate.”