

Fire Update

August 13, 2012

Were the fires just a week ago? It seems much, much longer that we have been trying to regain a sense of normalcy in our community. Over seventy-thousand acres have burned and about half of that was in Drumright. August 4, 2012 will live in our memory for many years. In fact, I have heard several residents equate that day with the tornado of 1974 – another devastating natural disaster for our town. Drumright has been extremely fortunate during this disaster. At last count, fifteen homes were lost and almost half of those were uninhabited; but numerous homes were saved. The Olive area suffered much greater loss. Olive Public Schools drove their bus routes and have determined that at least one-hundred and seventy homes were lost. So far the Olive School District is aware of approximately thirty school children that were affected.



Jenna Drake and Amanda Levis

The Mannford area suffered similar losses to Olive. I do not have a final count on homes that were lost, but have heard that sixty of their students were affected. The communities have risen up and begun the necessary steps to recovery. In Drumright, the Assembly of God and First Baptist were already prepared. August 4th was Love Thy Neighbor Day in Drumright – a local “mission” through Drumright Dental offering free dental work to Drumright citizens. Love Thy Neighbor is an annual event and over the years, area Drumright churches have participated.

The Assembly of God and River of Life Church participate each year by collecting children’s clothing for the school children. Drumright’s First Baptist is where our food bank is located and is a Red Cross facility in times of need.

The preparation for Love Thy Neighbor has been going on for several months. They just didn’t know they were preparing for a different August 4th event.



Immediately after the fires, the communities of Olive and Mannford also began collecting clothing and other essential items. An effort has been made between the three collection points to shift excess items around to help fill the needs of all fire victims. In addition, the City of Drumright used their tax ID to open a Fire Victims Relief Fund – providing assistance to all three communities. The fund is co-chaired by three outstanding Drumright citizens and the fire departments in each community verify actual victims.

When our District began mobilizing to collect items as well, it re-enforced why I am a Rotarian. The strength the District displayed helped me be strong for my club. Three of our club member's homes were saved by mere inches; and another club member was in danger the whole time, since he is Drumright's Fire Chief.

The local fire departments are in need as well. These fires have taken a toll on equipment and resources. Drumright is still under mandatory water rationing and it has been a struggle getting our water pressure back to normal range. If more fires occur, the situation would be much worse.

Our community still has great needs and I am putting them out to our fellow Rotarians. Currently, housing is a huge need. Victims are living in tents because looting has become a problem. At this time, additional clothing, toiletries and school supplies are not needed – the tables are stuffed and extra clothing is being stored for later. Here is a listing of items that would be beneficial to fire victims:

- New underwear and socks (all sizes)
- Bed Pillows
- Sheets and Pillow Cases
- Sleeping Bags
- Towels and Wash Clothes (all sizes)
- Laundry Baskets and Plastic Totes
- Toys

Again, on behalf of Drumright and our club, thank you for your generosity, love and support.

In Rotary Service,

Jena Drake
Rotary Club of Drumright, President