

MAY 24 2011



Columbians rally to help Joplin residents

By Janese Silvey

Columbia residents are sending more than thoughts and prayers to Joplin — many are also collecting much-needed supplies for the tornado-devastated southwest Missouri community.

Slide Show



Joplin tornado damage

“It’s been a very rough spring,” with tornados roaring through Southern states last month, “but they were still a little bit removed,” **University of Missouri student Ryan Bueckendorf said.** “Joplin is in our state. This is a lot more immediate, a lot closer to home. This isn’t going to be something where another state or region will do the heavy lifting.”

That’s why Bueckendorf and fellow Delta Chi fraternity member Warren Berner have set up a collection station. Through Friday evening, the men of Delta Chi will accept goods such as bottled water, canned food, batteries and flashlights at the back door of their apartment at 501 Turner Ave.

Bueckendorf isn’t sure how the group will deliver the donations but said either members will drive them to Joplin personally or will donate them to a local agency to deliver.

Kurt Jansen, a stay-at-home Columbia dad, is setting up a collection site in the parking lot outside Sears at the Columbia Mall from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday. He said he wanted to do something in addition to donating cash.

“I’ve been watching it develop over the last 12 to 18 hours, and it’s totally mind boggling,” Jansen said Monday afternoon. “I kept thinking ‘What can I do?’ I have a friend in Moberly who started putting together an event, and I thought if he can do it I can do it.”

Jansen's wife, Lisa, is a store manager at Sears and got permission from the mall to set up the site. Jansen hopes to collect new clothing items, bottled water and juices, blankets and toiletries.

David Rowe, owner of D'Rowe's, also plans to accept items on Saturday on the empty lot outside his restaurant. From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., he will take donations of personal hygiene products, water, diapers and baby formula.

The tornado "hits home a little bit, being in the state of Missouri," Rowe said. "It's a way to help out. It's the least we can do."

Rowe has an employee from Joplin, as well as some family friends there. At this point, he plans to drive the supplies to Joplin Saturday after 2 p.m.

"It doesn't matter if we get a pickup truck" load "or three box trucks, we'll take them down there," he said.

The Columbia Board of Realtors is accepting donations of new or gently used shoes through Wednesday at its office at 2309 Northwest Interstate 70 Dr. CEO Michael Brown said he contacted his counterpart at the Joplin office and she specifically requested shoes.

MU's Center for Family Policy & Research is focusing its collection efforts on children. Diapers, formula, stuffed animals, books and other items for infants, toddlers and preschoolers will be accepted at the facility, located at 1400 Rock Quarry Road, at Entrance 6 from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday. All items will be distributed in Joplin at a central distribution location in about a week.

Isle of Capri casino in Boonville is using its lobby as a drop-off site for donations, as well. The casino draws from a wide geographic area, so administrators there thought the lobby would provide a centralized location for people who want to help out, said Heather Wrapp, senior director of marketing. The casino will later turn over the donations to the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri to disperse.

The Blue Ridge Christian Church is also asking for donations, with an emphasis on bottled water, fruit, baby formula and toiletries. Anyone who can help is asked to e-mail brcc@socket.net. The church is in the process of organizing a trip to Joplin in the near future.

A grand opening event scheduled for the Museo Building at 3500 Buttonwood Drive Thursday evening will double as a fundraising event for Joplin. Building owner Brent Beshore is from Joplin and still has family there, said Emily Eldridge of Pure media.

Beshore's family members are OK, Eldridge said, but he has friends who have lost their homes.

Cash-only donations will be accepted during the grand opening, which starts at 5:00 p.m. and is open to the public. The money will be donated to the United Way in southwest Missouri.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Ann Wagner kicks off campaign fundraising -- in K.C.

BY JAKE WAGMAN • jwagman@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8268 | Posted: Monday, May 23, 2011 3:10 pm

ST. LOUIS • For someone banking on their residency as a key asset, Congressional hopeful **Ann Wagner** picked an unlikely place to begin her fundraising.

Wagner is scheduled to hold one of the first, if not the first, events of her campaign Monday evening across the state in Kansas City.

The fundraiser will be at the home of Warren K. Erdman, a Kansas City railroad executive who is chairman of the Board of Curators for the University of Missouri System.

The invitation seeks "\$1,000, \$500, or whatever you can make at this time to help seed this campaign."

Erdman, like Wagner, has a long history with the state GOP. He was chief of staff to former **U.S. Sen. Kit Bond**, and worked as an aide in Jefferson City to two governors -- Bond and **John Ashcroft**.

Wagner is former chairwoman of the Missouri Republican Party; her husband **Ray**, now a vice president at Enterprise, also worked in the Ashcroft administration.

In her campaign to replace **U.S. Rep. Todd Akin**, the Ballwin Republican has emphasized she is running to represent her "hometown" in Congress. That appears to be a thinly-veiled dig at primary rival **Ed Martin**, who lives across the district line in St. Louis Hills.

Martin, however, launched his campaign on Sunday with a rally at McArthur's Bakery in Lemay -- which is in the 2nd District, as it has been redrawn for 2012.



Local search-and-rescue unit joins effort

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Columbia-based Missouri Task Force 1 members arrived in tornado-ravaged Joplin early this morning to join recovery efforts and search for survivors.

Federal emergency management officials deployed the urban search-and-rescue team about 8 p.m. yesterday, and five members arrived in Joplin around midnight, said division Chief Gale Blomenkamp of the Boone County Fire Protection District. The task force is based with the volunteer fire district.

Another 80 members arrived before 3 a.m., and within 15 minutes, five search-and-rescue teams were deployed into the heart of the ravaged district of residential and commercial structures.

Crews searched a three-block area and helped recover human remains, Blomenkamp said.

The task force is made up of doctors, engineers, safety personnel, rescue dogs, information technology specialists and several others from throughout Missouri whose expertise is useful during disaster recovery. Search-and-rescue and medical personnel were singled out for last night's response.

Those deployed will remain in Joplin as long as two weeks if needed, Blomenkamp said. Additional members of the 210-member task force would replace initial responders as the response evolves.

Missouri Task Force 1 was in St. Louis over the weekend for a three-day training exercise. "Members from St. Louis and Kansas City had just got back to their homes by the time we activated," Blomenkamp said. "That's a lot of road time for a lot of people."

Blomenkamp said trucks were ready to deploy full of equipment because they had not been unloaded after the weekend exercise.

Zim Schwartze, director of the Columbia/Boone County Office of Emergency Management, was meeting with Columbia city officials this morning to discuss which personnel and equipment are available if the State Emergency Management Agency asks for assistance. Schwartze also provided an update on local resources that might be needed in Joplin to the Boone County Commission.

"We're getting inundated by people who are wanting to help," Schwartze said.

University of Missouri Health Care last night sent two ambulances with medical crews to Joplin, spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said this morning. She said the health care system also offered two trailers stocked with medical supplies to treat 200 people.

“We stand ready to help offer additional assistance as needed,” she said.

Neither Boone Electric Cooperative nor Columbia Water and Light had been asked for resources to be deployed to Joplin, representatives said this morning.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Dispatch from Joplin: An unwelcome homecoming

By Eliza Smith

May 23, 2011 | 12:23 p.m. CDT

Eliza Smith of Joplin, a student at the MU School of Journalism, was editor of her high school newspaper and wrote for The Jasper County Citizen in high school. She's working this summer as a reporter at the Columbia Missourian. Follow her on Twitter @ElizaMizzou.

Tornadoes are never quite as exciting as the one that carried Dorothy away, because you don't wake up in the wonderful world of Oz – you wake up amidst total devastation and heartbreak.

Twenty minutes before the tornado tore through my hometown of Joplin, my mom sent me a picture of baseball-sized hail in her back yard. I shrugged it off and went back to my TV show in Columbia – let me know when it's basketball-sized and I'll be impressed – until my phone started ringing with concerned friends letting me know they were praying for my family and friends back at home.

Without cable and the Weather Channel at my fingertips, I turned to Twitter – and was horrified to find that for the first time (and I hope the last), Joplin was trending.

The photos and videos streaming in made my stomach churn. St. John's Hospital falling apart. The high school flattened. Cars overturned. Homes smashed.

I frantically made phone calls, but cell service in Joplin was shot. It wasn't until 6:47 p.m., about 47 minutes after the tornado hit, that my mom finally got through to me.

Our house was intact – we live on the opposite end of town – but she had driven into the wreckage, and she was sobbing as she tried to describe the scene to me: cars wrapped around trees; people carrying what little they could salvage from their homes; children sitting on curbs, taking it all in.

I knew there wasn't much I could do. I have no medical training, no experience with this sort of disaster. But when your hometown is leveled – when strangers are lost, and when your best friend calls to tell you that her home is gone – what do you do?

You pack a bag with anything you can think of that might be of some use – towels and Pop-Tarts, pajamas, empty photo albums – and you go home.

Thirty miles outside of Joplin, I started meeting ambulances transporting people to area hospitals because we'd run out of room. At my exit, there were fluorescent signs that read, "Incident Ahead."

When I finally crawled into bed at 1 a.m., the death toll was at 24. When I woke up this morning, it was 89.

I woke to the sound of helicopters, and Al Roker on my TV standing in front of what's left of St. John's. Another storm started to roll in, and as Al nervously said, it looked just like the one that pre-empted Sunday's tornado. There was nothing to indicate that another was on the way – but we were all thinking it:
"Please, God, not again."

Now that the storm is finally clearing, I'm about to venture out. I don't think anything can prepare me for the heartbreaking reality that's just on the other side of town. Here, in my living room, I feel guilty in saying that everything is just fine.

But I have friends and family across town, picking up the pieces of their lives and trying to put them back together. Truth be told, they're all friends and family. There are no strangers in a time like this.