

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our valued Red Cross volunteers engaged and informed



ON THE HORIZON

■ **Sound the Alarm** smoke alarm installation event, Helena, May 3-4.

■ **Sound the Alarm** Billings, May 11.

Learn more about these events and how to volunteer on www.montanaredcross.org.

■ **World Red Cross Day**, May 8.

MEET A LEADER



LORA ERCANBRACK, Disaster Cycle Services chair, Lincoln County, Montana

I enjoy being chair for Lincoln County because of the great people I have the honor to serve with.

They are so kind, fun and loving and always ready to give when asked, even at 2 a.m. Our disaster team has the best input, ideas and encouragement, which makes for awesome team work. There are those who have taught and guided me along the way, which has made all the difference in how I treat and help others. I am blessed to be a part of Lincoln County Disaster Action Team!

FUN FACT: I have received the Boy Scout leaders highest award, The Silver Beaver.



In early April, severe flooding caused widespread damage in Idaho and Lewis counties, triggering mudslides and filling homes with water. The Red Cross and its partners continue to provide relief.

When disaster comes to town

Red Cross volunteer Denise Bacon is used to responding to others' emergencies, but this time it hit close to home

Red Cross volunteer Denise Bacon is calm in an emergency, until one came to her home.

"I panicked," she said. "I'm great dealing with everybody else's disasters, but when it hit home, I couldn't collect my bearings."

It's hard-won wisdom, but a perspective she'll carry into her next disaster response.

Bacon lives in Stites, Idaho, which was hit by record flooding in April. She, like many in the town, had to evacuate.

Within a few hours, the Red Cross was activated in the area.

Stites is "not even close" to OK yet, Bacon said.

"For the last week I've been organizing work crews to get to people's houses to help them," she said.

A swollen creek swept away a trailer house, and another was surrounded. An elderly man needed help clearing out rotting drywall as mold settled in. Another house was hit by mud so deep its roof was ankle-high.

Churches have contributed volunteers and meals for work crews.

"There's still so much that needs to happen

around here," Bacon said.

"I can't even thank the volunteers enough," she said. "It's been amazing to see how much community support and how much people rally to help those they don't even know."

Red Cross volunteer Jacki Kaelin-Williams of Kamiah knows well that disasters aren't just something that happen to people far away or on the news.

Williams went door-to-door doing an assessment in Stites checking on people and asking what they needed, in partnership with the county and two other agencies. Her team walked three miles that day and met the governor, who quizzed her on what the Red Cross was doing during the disaster. Williams' house was one of 64 lost in the Clearwater Complex fires of 2015.

She was in a caravan of people fleeing when she pulled over to ask a state trooper where they were bound.

You can go anywhere, he said, but be advised the Red Cross has a shelter set up.

She found a night's shelter there, and they connected her with pasture for her miniature donkeys.

When she retired in 2017, she joined the Red Cross and now volunteers 20-30 hours many weeks. She's very involved with smoke alarm installation (almost 400 and counting!) and is a pillowcase project instructor.

And with the recent flooding, she put her training in assessments into action for the first time.



Bacon

SEE FLOOD, PAGE 2

Five reasons why logging hours matters

Thank you for all you do to support our mission here in Idaho and Montana and further afield.

The time you donate is incredibly valuable, and that's why logging your hours is vital.

Below are the top five reasons for logging your hours.

1. Understanding how many hours volunteers donate helps the Red

Cross.

Because our mission continues to grow, understanding the number of hours given each year helps us plan our workforce and determine how many more volunteers we need to meet demands.

2. Understanding how many hours volunteers donate helps us retain staff and volunteers.

We can assess how well we are mobilizing our volunteer workforce and identify areas where we can improve.

Understanding the volume and type of work that volunteers do allows the organization to identify training opportunities for staff to ensure volunteers have necessary support.

SEE HOURS, PAGE 2



MILESTONES

PATSY BRUYER, 5 years

THOMAS COLEMAN, 5 years

DEBORAH FREY, 5 years

BEVERLY RAHNN, 5 years

BREAKING NEWS

YOUTH CORPS

Do you have a teen in your family? Or a college kid coming home for the summer? Encourage them to take part in the Red Cross Summer Youth Corps program.

Volunteers are needed in Missoula, Helena, Great Falls and Bozeman and in Boise, Lewiston, Pocatello and Idaho Falls. They will welcome our blood donors.

Those 13 to 24 years old are eligible. Volunteers must work 10 shifts between June 15 and August 31.

To learn more about these Montana volunteer opportunities, contact Sarah FitzGerald at 406-210-8735. Those in Idaho should contact Marcia Gnehm at 208-401-6720.



22

Volunteers joined us in March.



22

Disaster responses in March. Families helped: 30.

TRAINING INSTITUTE



More than 100 volunteers attended the Training Institute, laughing and learning along the way.



Teams went door-to-door in April, walking three miles in one day to check on people and asking what they could do to help.

Flood: Williams answers call

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"There were a lot of firsts," she said.

She also was part of her first, a Multi Agency Resource Center, where agencies and nonprofits meet under one roof so those affected have a one-stop shop to connect with resources to help them get back on their feet.

And, she helped operate the Red Cross shelter, finding herself on the other side of the helping hand this time.

"From the time they ordered the shelter to set up was five hours," she said. "Normally we could have done it in four, but we had a mudslide to contend with."

No one slept at the shelter, but people came for food, supplies, referrals, advice and comfort.

Autumn St. Amand was driving the emergency response vehicle down U.S. Highway 12 when she encountered a road blocked by a mudslide.

The sheriff decided the need for Red Cross services was so great that they cleared the way for her, just enough.

Williams was only just back from Montana and training in West Yellowstone when the call came that "We're going to have a problem here today," she said. "It just carried on from there."

— Story by Red Cross writing team volunteer Kristen Inbody



Williams

Hours: Showing our impact

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

3. Understanding how many hours volunteers donate helps us retain them year over year.

Capturing hours helps us make sure that we are not asking too much of our volunteers.

4. Understanding how many hours volunteers give to the Red Cross is a powerful way we can communicate the story of our growing

mission.

The increasing number of hours each year helps demonstrate the growth and scope of the mission, a story that resonates with the community we serve and helps us secure more funding.

5. Understanding how many hours volunteers give helps us quantify the value of your time and talent.

Every hour recorded in volunteer connection represents delivery of our mission and helps demonstrate the impact of the donor dollar.