

# DISASTER RESPONSE SPECIAL EDITION

## Desert Southwest Annual Conference

### UMCOR Conference Call

#### **UMCOR Updates Disaster Response Coordinators**

On a September 8 conference call, UMCOR provided the most current information on disaster responses in the US. Representatives from the affected areas gave reports, including the fires in California and Washington. To summarize the reports, it can be said the need for volunteers is great, but the pandemic is limiting the response.

In Louisiana, for instance, housing teams is impractical; the closest available accommodations are 3 hours away. Further, in the disaster zone, power and water may not be restored for 2-3months.

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#### **Training Opportunities**

Angela Overstreet, UMCOR training coordinator, reported a decision was made that **Basic Training** for new ERT's must be done in-person as the hands-on skills (tarping, ladder safety, hand tools, etc) are critical to the process. Team building, small group activities, and interactive exercises are also important to the learning process.

The good news coming from Angela is a **Recertification Class** for those with badges expiring this year will be available online. Classes will be taught by Polly Turner and/or Tom Mattick, our certified trainers using an online curriculum. Both instructors are required to take a training class on the curriculum before teaching it. With its release this month, you can expect classes to be offered later this month and early October. Those with expiring badges in 2020 will be notified by email of the classes.

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In other regions, damage from Derecho (Iowa), Isaias (east coast), and Hanna (Texas) all need volunteers, but anticipate it will be the spring of 2021 before teams can travel into those areas due to COVID. The local ERT'S are responding by providing flood buckets, hygiene kits, and some tarps.



Literally, closer to home, Sonja Edd-Bennett, Cal-Nevada Conference, reported on the multiple fires in California. As this is an active situation and access to the affected areas is limited, the disaster response team is focused on assembling Wildfire Kits for homeowners. These kits cost between \$100-150.

As our ability to respond to these sundry disasters becomes available, notice will be sent to you.

