



As of
27 OCT 2007
 12:00 NOON PDT

Overview of Fires:

Click on this link for the latest “Southern California Fires at a Glance”

<http://www.fire.ca.gov/index.php>

In addition, to view maps of Rotary Districts in Zones 23/24 click and then click on the District Number of the District Website you'd like to visit: <http://www.rotaryzone2324.org/map.html>

R.I. Director's Comments:

The Southern California Fires have been receiving extensive media coverage. Some of the early fires began last Saturday 20 October as powerful Santa Anna winds blew into the Southern California area (with gusts reported up to 80-100 mph). Initially fire coverage centered on Malibu, CA (in D5280) – and given the prominence of this high profile community, the fire and damage immediately drew international attention.

During the ensuing 24-48-72 hours, as the number of fires exploded—peaking at **23**, to date: www.fire.ca.gov/index.php—throughout the seven Southern California counties, media attention increased exponentially.

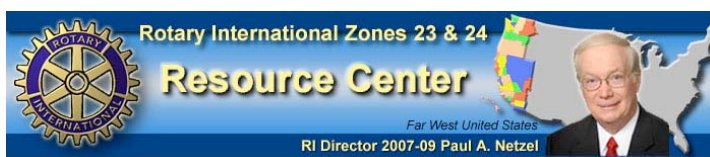
And, of course, Rotarians locally, and around the world began to focus their attention on and to express their concerns for the well being of everyone in the areas most directly effected.

Everyone ultimately asks: “What can we do to help?”

Contrary to most natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, etc.) that have a relatively limited timeframe during which they do their primary damage – wildfires, such as those currently being experienced in Southern California, can take a far longer period until they are eventually controlled. Therefore, more time elapses before the full scale of the tragedies can be assessed. This is the period our seven Southern California Rotary districts are in at the moment.

On the bright side, first responders have done a magnificent job in most all cases throughout the Southern California wildfires. Although there was a point by mid-week where the resources were somewhat overwhelmed – the assessment currently suggests efforts are generally in good hands. The reports we have heard have been amazing in terms of how well the first-responders have performed their duties – from San Diego to Lake Arrowhead and beyond.

I have received status reports from each District – and believe we would all agree the two hardest hit are **District 5330** (which includes Lake Arrowhead, Big Bear, Riverside and the Coachella Valley area) and **District 5320** (mainly in San Diego County).



Visit our Website:
<http://www.rotaryzone2324.org/>

Below are reports from three District Governors (D5300, DG Charlie Barr; D5330 DG Mark Howison; D5340 DG Jim O'Meara) which give an excellent summary of where things stand in their areas.

Reports from District 5300:

From: Charles M Barr, District Governor

Wednesday, October 24, 2007 9:42 PM - Subject: Fires in Southern California

You may have wondered why I have not communicated with you previously about the fires here in Southern California. There are several reasons. First the good news is that we have not, as of this writing, had any fires in our district. The bad news is that the districts to the east, south, and west of us have had terrible losses. On the news tonight it was stated that in San Diego they had 1261 homes lost, and another 10,000 that were in serious danger. The dollar amount loss of homes exceeds one billion dollars. The news station also reported that the evacuation in the fire affected areas was the largest in the history of the United States.

I have been in touch with the governors in the districts that surround us and they are trying to get an assessment of how we as Rotarians can most effectively help those who have lost there homes.

The mountain areas around Lake Arrowhead were also seriously hit by fire. Losses are said to be over 200 homes and businesses. Sadly it appears that several of the fires were set. One person has been arrested. When a plan is in place to be effective with our help I will immediately let you know. The one thing that I have heard is there are no blood donations at this time in San Diego. Not that they are in a serious shortage at this point. However if you are inclined to donate blood I am sure that it would be appreciated. As you know I live in Laguna Beach. In 1993 we had a terrible fire storm and over 300 homes were lost in the north end of our small community. It was a time that our small community came together to help each other. We as Rotarians can come together to help others in their time of need. The Lake Forrest and Irvine fires are about 15 miles from me as the crow flies. Monday and Tuesday morning the smoke was so thick that it looked like fog. Today the skies were quite clear however when I went to my car ash was coming down like a fine snow. Please, as Rotarians lets all keep those who have lost so much in our prayers.
Charles M. Barr, DG

Report from District 5330:

From: Mark Howison, District Governor

Friday, October 25, 2007 11:20 AM –

Subject: How you can help fire victims in Southern California

To: Rotarians On The Internet (ROTians)

Dear ROTians,

Thank you so much for your recent inquiries as to donations. There have been over 300 homes destroyed by the fires in our District - many belonging to Rotarians.

There are two ways to donate to the fire victims in District 5330.

The first is to simply send a check to:

**District 5330
Fire Relief 2007
3297 Russell St
Riverside, CA 92501-2248**

The other way to donate is online at:

https://www.sporg.com/pom/registration?cmd=event_info&event_id=96881

Either method of donating will go to Rotarians affected by the fires. We are in the process of a "Needs Assessment" report, but those impacted have not yet been able to return to their communities. Our first priority will be to assist Rotarians. Once their needs are met any remaining funds will be distributed to non-profit organizations helping others in the affected areas.

Thank you. Yours In Rotary Service, Mark Howison, Governor 2007-08, District 5330

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From: George Steele, D5330 PDG (2005-06)

Wednesday, October 24, 2007 9:42 PM - Subject: Fires in Southern California

Thanks for your thoughts and concerns. Sue and I are just fine, but the smoke and ash in the air is terrible! Yesterday we had a fire break out about 6 miles to the northwest of our home, fortunately CDF and Riverside County jumped all over it with air and ground assaults controlling the fire within 2.5 hours. The Palomar fire which is to the south about 9 miles (over a ridge) is about 50% contained and the Rice fire in Fallbrook (about 15 miles to the southwest from us) is about 40% contained. The Rancho California Fire in the west end of Temecula (right next door to Murrieta) has been contained and nearly extinguished. Other than the smoke and ash -- we are all ok.

The mountain area fire of our district (Lake Arrowhead and Running Springs) is still not controlled or contained. This fire is a forest fire rather than a brush fire in extremely rough terrain. This area is under mandatory evacuation with all families, including several Rotarians, living either in the desert or valleys, including the Murrieta, Temecula Valley.

District Governor Mark Howison has made an information page available on his web site for individuals, groups, or clubs to post requests for assistance or assets available for those wishing to help. The site is: <http://www.dg0708.info/forumt.asp> . I suspect there will not be a lot of activity until the fire is out and people begin returning to their homes, or whatever is remaining.

In the meantime, there seems to be a need for activities at the shelters — organized games for both children and adults to help with the boredom people are experiencing while waiting for news of when they can return to home, school and work. This is being taken care of locally but, I mention this so that if your area should experience a disaster requiring shelters, you might consider stocking up and storing games, balls, bats, playing cards and bridge tables, etc. to provide to shelters if the need arises.

We can all feel really proud of the integrated command structure established by local, county and state firefighters set up to respond these kinds of disasters. Even though there has been severe loss of property, firefighters from all over California, Nevada, and Arizona have been doing a remarkable job.

Thanks again for your concerns. Yours in Rotary friendship and service, George Steele, DG 2005-06

Report from District 5340:

From: Jim O'Meara, District Governor

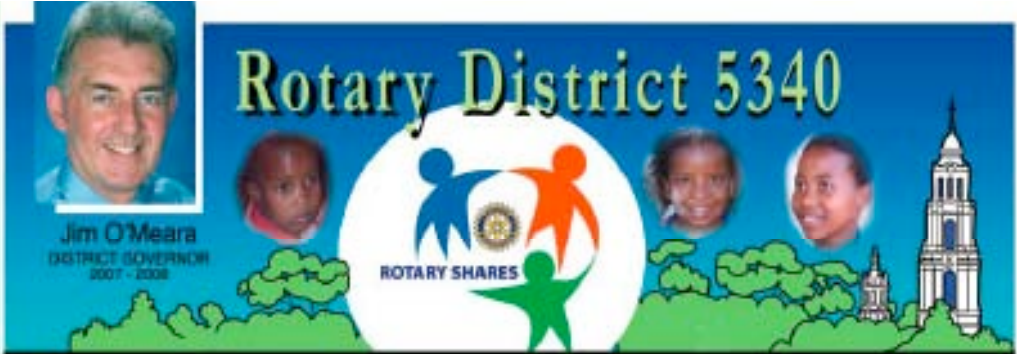
Friday, October 25, 2007 12:00 PM - Subject: Fires in Southern California

As you can image the calls and e-mails are pouring in to District 5340. I have prepared a newsletter (See Attached) that I can share with the zone.

Many of the e-mails are from within the zone. As it now stands, no one needs to come into our District for assistance. There has been a remarkable effort from our county, and the San Diego Association of Governments that has provided us maximum lifesaving results.

Many are returning to their homes, and relocation efforts are now underway. If anyone wishes to make a financial contribution I can forward everyone to a specific foundation that has been set-up. *(Please see the Foundation information and details in the attached newsletter.)*

Posting elements of my newsletter on the zone website may provide information for many. Your comments are welcome. Jim O'Meara, DG 07/08 5340



The header features a blue background with the text "Rotary District 5340" in large, stylized letters. On the left is a portrait of Jim O'Meara, District Governor 2007-2008. In the center is the Rotary logo with the text "ROTARY SHARES" below it. On the right are portraits of three other individuals and a depiction of a building. The date "October 25, 2007 - ISSUE THREE" is printed in the bottom right corner of the header area.

Governor's Message

As the fires whip through our District, when every life in our District has been impacted, as losses mount, Rotarians once more come together in the Family of Rotary to meet this huge growing challenge. The Rotary Clubs of District 5340 are Sharing, and expressing their bravery with each gust of the winds.

Today I had the honor to speak at a Rotary club that was among those most devastated by the fires, Rancho Bernardo. When I spoke to their president Charley, the club had decided on Wednesday that they would meet as usual on Thursday. While meeting with the club I found their dedication, and actual bravery something that I have no doubt is present in each of our challenged clubs, yet still remarkable to witness.

During the last few day I have been contacting club presidents on the phone, inquiring of their safety, their families, and the well being of club members. In a word I have found hope. The presidents have also been contacting their club members, learning of lost homes, near disasters, and the joys in finding their home was spared, and always—what can I do, I have room in my home... or will we be meeting this week?

Members shared their stories of evacuation, where they were staying, and their obvious calling to join with their friends in Rotary fellowship by attending the club meeting.

We have several Rotarians who have been evacuated, and clubs that need to reschedule meetings, and meeting locations.

Today it was the Rotary Club of Rancho Bernardo, tomorrow I will visit another club, and there is no doubt in my mind that the courage, and strength that I've witnessed today will be shown again tomorrow, and day-after-day as I meet with the undaunting Rotary clubs in District 5340.

Reaching Out Into Our Communities

Rotarians already are involving themselves in community service activities. There are several areas where shelters are being provided within our county, and they also provide opportunities to serve. Please note, we are still receiving notice to minimize our driving throughout the area. So please, when volunteering, please choose the shelter nearest your home that is providing services, this may be your best opportunity. When at all possible, CARPOOL.

Financial Contributions

It has been suggested for those who wish to make a financial contribution that the San Diego Foundation will provide prompt services without our District.

The San Diego Foundation had established an After-the-Fire Fund following the fires of 2003 to make grants to organizations with professional disaster expertise to assist individual and families affected by those terrible fires. Thanks to the generosity of many, they were able to donate over \$3 million dollars to support emergency response, recovery and rebuilding efforts in the fire-ravaged communities. (Please go to their website at: www.sdfoundation.org to read a comprehensive report about the work following the 2003 fires).

Today they have announced establishing another After-the-Fires Fund and they are accepting donations. They will make sure these funds are disbursed as quickly and strategically as possible with the help of the San Diego Foundation

Disaster Relief Board. Once the fires have passed, our community will face immense needs in every area of life starting with food, shelter and clothing and extending to social services, ongoing health care, environmental concerns, animal welfare and even scholarship for students in fire-affected families.


If you you are interested in helping to rebuild our community following this year's fire:

1. Go to their website at www.sdfoundation.org to donate or
2. Make you check payable to:
The San Diego Foundation
and send to:


The San Diego Foundation
2508 Historic Decatur road, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92106

*In the memo area of your check indicate:
After-The-Fires Fund*

To access a crisper copy of D5340's OCT 07 Newsletter, please click here:
<http://www.rotary5340.org/newsletter/Newsletter07-10.pdf>



Rotary International Zones 23 & 24
Resource Center



Far West United States
RI Director 2007-09 Paul A. Netzel

Visit our Website:
<http://www.rotaryzone2324.org/>