

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our valued Red Cross volunteers engaged and informed



39

Disaster responses in February. People helped: 155.



LET'S BE SAFE

For tips for keeping you and your family safe during the coronavirus outbreak, check out these sites:

- www.cdc.gov
- www.who.int
- www.ready.gov
- redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/

Watch a personal message from Red Cross CEO Gail McGovern here: vimeo.com/39866



MILESTONES

MYRNA SAMARGIS,
15 years

GREG ADAMS,
10 years

ANITA KNAPP,
10 years

JARED ALLEMAN,
5 years

CAROL ANDERSON,
5 years

KATHY FRANCK,
5 years

JEANETTE JACKSON,
5 years



Volunteer Landis Meeks organizes six blood drives a year in Cut Bank and helps respond to disasters in an area that spans 200 miles. He's been with the Red Cross for 30 years.

A Red Cross 'ambassador'

From opening shelters to organizing blood drives, Cut Bank volunteer tallies three decades of service

When a January fire swept across the prairie in Glacier County, along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains in northcentral Montana, two colonies of evacuated Hutterites wandered a Cut Bank grocery store with no place to go.

The store manager knew to call Landis Meeks, the face of Red Cross to people across a wide swath of the region. Landis set up a shelter for three busloads of Hutterites, members of a communal Anabaptist sect, in the town civic center. A local pizza place dropped off 20 pizzas.

LANDIS MEEKS BY THE NUMBERS

Total blood donations: 173

Gallons donated: 22

Drives Landis organizes in Cut Bank each year: 6

Units collected at those drives last year: 334

The American Red Cross is honoring Landis for 30 years of service, which includes responding to local disasters and organizing community blood drives.

Landis said perseverance usually is enough to see a project to success.

SEE MEEKS, PAGE 2

Coronavirus: Staying informed

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to grow, the Red Cross of Idaho and Montana is dedicated to sharing information with our workforce as it becomes available. We are focused on the safety and wellbeing of our employees, volunteers, blood donors and recipients, partners and clients while continuing to carry out our mission.

Each Friday, the Red Cross of Idaho

and Montana will send out an email with updated information about the impact of the virus on our organization



and steps we are taking to keep our workforce and clients safe. We will also recap portions of that information here.

If you have questions about the coronavirus, please email them to IDMT.info@redcross.org. We have formed a team who will monitor this

email and answer questions as promptly as possible.

Events postponed

Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and other public health officials, the Red Cross of Idaho and Montana has made the decision to postpone our Sound the Alarm smoke alarm installation events in Nampa,

SEE CORONAVIRUS, PAGE 2

Let your voice be heard: Take your volunteer satisfaction survey

Meeks: Deep community roots

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“Usually things will work out,” he said. “Sometimes they don’t work out the first time, but you just keep plugging.”

When a disaster call comes in, Meeks might be headed to a fire in Box Elder or wind damage in Babb, a 200-mile range.

Landis became involved with the Red Cross through his involvement with the Knights of Columbus.

“One of our pillars is civic activities. I called to see what I could do to help the Red Cross. I helped the organizer, and she said at the end of it, I’m retiring, effective immediately. I’ve been doing it ever since,” he said.

That was 1990. Five years later, someone called and said an individual needed a hand after a house fire.

“I found out what they needed, and I visited with someone at Red Cross,” he said.

Just like that, Landis was on the Disaster Action Response team.

Landis is the Red Cross to the people of his community in northcentral Montana, said Ted Koenig, regional disaster officer for Idaho and Montana.

“Wearing that badge and that vest, being in the community and having those conversations, Landis has built the Red Cross’s reputation and extended the work we do,” Ted said. “We appreciate his willingness to say yes and support folks even when they’re far from home.”

Landis is the volunteer nearest the Blackfeet Reservation and has responded to fires and other moments of crisis.

“He’s a great ambassador for the mission,” Ted said. “He’s warmly received. He travels with this aura of someone who stands out for his com-



Landis Meeks frequently donated blood until he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He organizes six blood drives a year in Cut Bank.

mitment to service in his community.”

Landis’s deep roots in the community and the respect his neighbors have for him are key to his success, added Wendy McGrew, regional volunteer services officer for Idaho and Montana. “He’s been a stable part of that community for so long.”

Landis has been a blood donor as well as blood drive organizer. He’s given 22 gallons of blood, though pancreatic cancer forestalled recent donations. He’s a big advocate for the Red Cross blood donor app.

“We have a lot of people who want to come in at lunch. They can be in and out in a heartbeat,” he said.

Landis calls previous donors to encourage them to come out for drives, which makes a big difference in turnout.

Those who help him with blood drives keep him inspired. The newspaper calls sometimes to remind him to get information in for the next drive.

Hutterite colonies come out in force to donate blood.

“There’s a good group of people who

Urgent need for blood

Through March 24, more than 9,000 Red Cross blood drives have been canceled because of the coronavirus outbreak, resulting in about 250,000 fewer blood donations. That includes more than 130 drives in Idaho and Montana.

There is no evidence that the coronavirus is transmitted by blood transfusions, and we are taking additional steps to keep staff and donors safe.

- All donors will have their temperature taken prior to their medical screening.
- Hand sanitizer is available at all stations.
- Staff are required to decontaminate equipment and surfaces after processing each donor at each step in the process.
- Blood drives are set up to maximize distance between each donor.

We are extending donation center hours to accommodate more donors.

If you are healthy, please consider making a blood or platelet donation appointment at RedCrossBlood.org or by calling 800-RED-CROSS.

help me,” he said. “We’re a team.”

— Story by writing team volunteer Kristen Inbody

I’m a fiscal review volunteer, and I give blood

Montana volunteer John McGrew: “I first became a blood donor almost 40 years ago while in high school when the Red Cross came to our campus to recruit students as new donors. At the time, my mother was recovering from cancer and had been a blood recipient. Since she was no longer eligible to give, it seemed like a grateful thing to do to make up the difference. I’ve been a regular donor ever since.

Years later, I was told that because my blood lacked a particular benign-to-adults virus that most of the rest of the population possessed, my blood was very valuable to preemie babies who had little to no immunity

from common pathogens. It’s nice to know that there are children alive today because I took an hour out of my day every couple of months to donate.

In our technologically advanced and affluent society, we take so much for granted. We are able to manufacture so many amazing things with such seeming ease, quantity and at low cost. And yet, there is still only one place that blood comes from, and when someone needs it, they need it now and it’s invaluable to that person. That’s why I give.”

Why do you give? Send an email and a picture to matthew.ochsner@redcross.org.



Coronavirus: Send us your questions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bozeman and Billings. We hope to reschedule these events and will share information as it becomes available.

Coronavirus concerns also have led to the postponement of our Disaster Institute. We also hope to reschedule this event. Stay tuned on this front as well.

Keeping our facilities safe

Red Cross is focusing on keeping our buildings safe through increased cleaning and sanitizing.

Buildings are cleaned daily, with high-impact areas being cleaned every four hours.

Anyone entering our buildings — including paid staff, volunteers and blood donors — will have their temperature taken as soon as they enter. We are asking volunteers to avoid all non-essential travel to Red Cross facilities.

Responding to disasters

Other disasters aren’t taking a break during this tough time. Since March 1, our volunteer teams have responded to 19 incidents in Idaho and Montana.

A huge thank you to our volunteers for their commitment to helping their communities in times of need.

Volunteer opportunity

Feeling cooped up and looking for a

way to help out without leaving home? Here’s a great volunteer opportunity.

April is the Month of the Military Child. Help support these efforts by creating homemade cards encouraging children and supporting families while their service members are away.

Reach out to Anthony Trimarco at anthony.trimarco@redcross.org to sign up.

Send us your questions

Thank you again for supporting our mission during this rapidly changing and trying time. Please send any questions to IDMT.info@redcross.org.

And stay well.

Time to say goodbye

Idaho emergency response vehicle makes final run

When I became a Red Cross volunteer in 2012, I couldn't wait to finish my initial training so I could start responding to disaster calls and eventually deploy on national disasters. Once I studied the long list of options, there was no doubt in my mind what I wanted to do first -- become an emergency response vehicle driver.

Not only did it sound challenging and exciting, but also helpful to communities in need in so many ways. Once my initial requirements like sheltering, food safety and feeding were met, I dove in head-first and took all the required courses. Once my road test was completed, I became a proud emergency response vehicle driver!

My first assignment wasn't actually a disaster response at all, but actually the Western Days parade in Twin Falls. I remember well the pride I felt as the crowd waved and cheered as we drove by.

Many other assignments were to follow, including smoke alarm installs here in southcentral Idaho, hydration and first aid stations at air shows at the Twin Falls and Jerome County airports and numerous disaster action team calls.

But in 2017 the first truly big call came in -- the chance to drive our ERV across the country to respond to a major disaster. Don Nesbitt and I were deployed to Houston to assist with Hurricane Harvey. We were stationed at Kitchen 11 in Sugarland. Don was able to stay with our ERV as a driver who helped with feeding, and I was assigned as the kitchen supervisor. I had the privilege of sending our ERV, along with dozens of others, loaded with hot meals out to feed thousands of people daily throughout north Texas. We did



ABOVE: Diana Ochsner and Jim Brown during the emergency response vehicle's final run. **LEFT:** A row of ERVs, including #3079, at the kitchen in Sugarland, Texas, during Hurricane Harvey response.

this for five weeks until our mission was complete.

Experiencing this massive operation first-hand and seeing the ERVs in action was very emotional. Knowing that our own ERV was instrumental in this massive operation made it an extra special deployment for me.

A few weeks ago, Jim Brown and I drove that ERV from Jerome to Idaho Falls to empty all the cargo into storage, then returned with an empty truck. This was to be the last mission for the ERV, which was decommissioned on March 10. The #3079 served Idaho proudly for many years, leaving behind a plethora

of memories.

While #3079 has moved on, we have a new ERV in our stable. Don and I were fortunate enough to deploy cross-country again in 2018 on the maiden voyage of our brand new ERV, where we began a new chapter of memories in South Carolina for Hurricane Florence.

It was another emotional and rewarding experience, and I'll be ready when the next opportunity comes my way to once again deliver comfort and care with the help of our emergency response vehicle.

— By Idaho volunteer
Diana Ochsner

Thanks for completing disaster training

This year, you've likely received a call-to-action to complete updated Disaster Action Team training. The updated training, delivered on our online learning system, EDGE, included Disaster Action Team Fundamentals and Disaster Action Team Management, among others.

Now, nearing the end of this push to complete the updated training, we're happy to report on its success.

As a direct result of your efforts, the region has increased its capacity to support its mission. The most visible example of this is the increase in fully trained Disaster Action Team service

MEET OUR VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP TEAM

Learn more about the volunteer leaders in our region here:
<https://sway.office.com/DEOJBnt4ZkGK9MiK?ref=Link>

associates and supervisors: 161 of our 190 service associates and supervisors are current on the training for their roles.

Along with the completed training and promotions, this effort has also taught us the importance of continuing education. Just like the professionals we all rely on in our daily lives, continuing

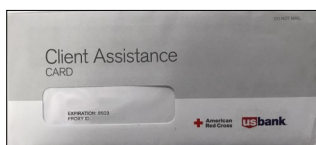
education helps us as Red Crossers expand our knowledge and stay up to date on the latest efforts the organization is making to serve its clients better.

For those of you reading this who are new or newly trained service associates or supervisors as a result of this continuing education, thank you for your hard work and commitment to our mission.

Client assistance card verification a success

Thanks to client assistance card and mission card holders who responded to our February request to electronically verify information on cards in your possession.

Your help with our new process made our trial run a success. This process is now our quarterly routine so we can efficiently maintain regional



compliance.

Please keep an eye out for reminders for the next quarterly cardholder veri-

fication in early June.

In the meantime, continue to send Charge Out Record forms (f1032) to Angela James whenever you receive new cards or use up those in your possession.

If you have questions, please reach out to Angela at ange-la.james@redcross.org.