

BC Unit Report Mennonite Disaster Service – Region 5 October 2009

It is hard to believe that it has been about 10 months since the rain/snow flood situation in Greendale. That was the major event in BC for MDS this past year. I refer you to the report submitted in February 2009 in Mobile, Alabama for those details.

I can't remember a year like the one we've had here in BC weather-wise. I know, this is to be an MDS report, not a weather report, but somehow weather and disasters are very closely related! From the heavy snow last winter (see first paragraph), to a record dry and hot summer (yes, it's true, Abbotsford hit 38 degrees this summer!), to an amazing colour display this fall, complete with our first major storm already and our first frost on Thanksgiving weekend, this has been a year of records. So, as the province burned this summer, we watched...and waited...and prayed...and waited...and for all the forest fires, only 4-5 structures were impacted in the entire province. Praise God for his hand of protection.

Our BC unit has undertaken two separate investigations (one in 70 Mile House, the other near Rock Creek in the interior of BC). These investigations have led to good conversations, but to date, no further response has been needed. We aim to continue to be ready to respond. We are in process of recruiting more board members (2 new members already confirmed), which will be followed up by specific discussions as to how we "share the load" here in BC as board members. I trust there will be more clarity in this regard by the end of the calendar year. MDS again had a display at the annual MCC Festival/Sale at the Tradex. It is good to keep the MDS name/logo in front of people. We are grateful to the many people from our province who get out and serve with MDS.

We continue to be a part of our provincial government and NGO council, which has been given a new name...IDCBC (Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia). There is good information flow through our provincial emergency preparedness staff. A new initiative this year is the formation of a Faith-Based subgroup of this council. We met once in fall (a good start!). It is interesting to sit around a table like that and discuss/grapple/disagree to what extent we do or don't "proselytize" during a disaster response. Pray for wisdom for Dan Zehr as he represents MDS on IDCBC. The next conference call is planned for November 20, 2009. I would like to officially thank MCC-BC for partnering with us (we use their mailing address) and Jake/Erna Janzen for the wonderful trailer storage facility.

As we look forward, we continue to desire to equip our churches to respond, both locally and abroad. I was privileged to meet with a group from our church last week and update them on things MDS related. Oh to have the time to do this with the 100+ churches in the province. So, to conclude, we move forward with anticipation and confidence in God. To Him be the glory and honour.

Written by Leonard Klassen (chair)
Board Members: Leonard Klassen, Dan Zehr, David Dirks, Ike Thiessen, Frank Friesen, Les Friesen, Peter Andres, Waldo Neufeld, Gerald Dyck
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AC Report for Region V Retreat – October 09

Atlantic Canada was blessed with abundant moisture this year , late August we had the remains of Hurricane Bill and then a week later we had tropical storm Danny , not a lot of damage . We have had a number of people serving long term in the Gulf region and just recently Leonard Friesen and I were at the Teen Challenge home in Memramcook NB to see how MDS could be involved . They are getting all new windows put in and they need someone to insulate around and on the inside of the windows and put new trim on . Leonard can report more fully at the meeting.

Shalom

Peter Bunnett

**Activities of MDS Ontario Board
Oct. 30, 2008 to Oct. 30, 2009**

15 11 2008 – 20 12 2008; Nick Hamm to New Orleans as Co-director

28 12 2008 -Orlan Martin to Harriston On to assess flood damage

28 12 2009 - Henry Weber, Delmer Erb to New Hamburg to assess flood damage; door to door investigation

01 2009 - Nick Hamm to New Orleans to facilitate construction workshop with Clete Yoder. Also conducted 3 more workshops with Clete Yoder in Deweyville Tx. (January) and New Orleans (March & October 2009)

25 04 29 - MDS ON BD Executive Meeting (Orlan Martin, Nick Hamm, Delmer Erb, Neil Isaak)

23 05 2009 - MDS ON BD Meeting (present: Orlan Martin, Nick Hamm, Glenn Buck, Martin Durksen, Neil Isaak, Karen Martin, Dick Radstake, Cornelius Reimer, Henry Weber)

11 06 2009 - Orlan Martin to Social Services Planning Advisory Committee for Waterloo, Waterloo, Ont.

29 06 2009 - Glenn & Esther Buck to Pass Christian as Co-directors

01 08 2009 - Cornelius Reimer; Investigation of high winds in Aylmer, Tillsonburg

15 08 2009 -Orlan Martin coordinates assessment by CCP of Red Lake for tornado damage to Ear Falls, On

21 08 2009 - Delmer Erb and brother to Vaughan to assess Tornado damage

21 08 09 - Orlan Martin, Henry Weber to Durham On to assess tornado damage; follow up investigations 22 08 2009 and 24 08 2009. Teams from Hawkesville organized to assist in cleanup. Henry Weber coordinates volunteers. Old Order Mennonites arrive by bus; organized by own community.

29 08 2009 - MDS ON BD Executive meeting (Orlan Martin, Nick Hamm, Delmer Erb, Glenn Buck)

26 09 2009 - MDS ON BD Meeting (Present: Orlan Martin, Nick Hamm, Karen Martin, Henry Weber, Glenn Buck, Martin Durksen)

31 09 2009 - MDS ON BD Executive to Vaughan, On to assess Tornado damage

05 10 2009 - Nick Hamm, Henry Weber, Glenn Buck to Vaughan to fell and cut up fallen trees from tornado for client through Red Cross; 8 volunteers in addition to above including 4 Toronto area volunteers through CCP Dale Reesor.

15 10 2009 - Orlan Martin, Glenn Buck to Social Services Planning Advisory Committee for Waterloo

26 10 2009 - Nick Hamm to Social Services Pandemic Preparedness Meeting, Guelph, Ont.

Region V Retreat and Fundraiser Planning – Karen Martin, coordinator

MDS Construction Details for New Construction – Nick Hamm wrote (12) MDSCDs and reviewed architectural house plans for MDS Bi-National

Capacity Building ON

Assisting Quebec Unit Start-Up – numerous invitations but no response

Lazarus Rising Homeless Ministry, Toronto with MCCO - Nick Hamm participated in street walk to view potential sites for new location. MDS ON may be asked to assist with renovating.

Habitat for Humanity Niagara looking for partner to provide volunteers – potential MDS Niagara involvement

CCP & ON Board Workshops – date set for Mar. 27, 2010

MDS Alberta Report to Region 5 Board in Ontario 2009

The MDS Alberta board has been active on MDS projects this year – one of which was in the province.

Our board meetings have representatives from most of the regions in Alberta - and many of them are serving regularly on MDS projects. Board meeting attendance is never 100% - due to someone serving in MDS project leadership – we're not disappointed by this!!

We had one "local" project in Alberta this year and I'll use Garry Wiens' report here:

October 14, 2009 we left for Smoky Lake, Alberta to help Judy Orr, a lady on welfare, with health problems and no fire insurance to repair her home which suffered a fire just after Christmas of 2008. Myself, Jim Dyck, Pincher Creek and Don Plett, Gem, AB were the Alberta Board members involved in this project. Her case was assessed by myself in Apr/09. She agreed to do some work (fix the roof and remove the old drywall, and install some windows). Our board agreed to help her, committing a maximum of \$5,000.00 to her repair.

I called around the province and was able to get 10 volunteers who could work one or two days on her home on Oct 15 – 17/09. Three of us got there Wed. evening to begin first thing Thurs morning (15th). We were joined the next two days by other volunteers from around the province. We installed two new headers on windows they had replaced; two complete new windows and one exterior door. She had purchased 2 x 6 windows instead of 2 x 4 which would have fit her walls so we needed to fir out the walls and move electrical boxes. We removed walls and framed in doorways as per her request. We finished insulating and vapor barrier on all exterior walls and ceilings. We roughed in the plumbing and new electrical circuits, a new fixture and fan in the bathroom. We installed all the drywall. We modified and installed lower kitchen cabinets and placed her appliances. We hooked up her plumbing in the bathroom and kitchen. When we finished and prepared to leave, Saturday at noon, we left a very happy, grateful lady. She told us she had enjoyed her first shower, Friday night, in her own home, since her fire.

It was a very rewarding experience and I'm grateful for the volunteers who were able to join us to make this happen.

Our kitchen trailer was used at the Relief Sale in Didsbury, by the Rosthern Junior College in Saskatchewan during their kitchen renovation, and by a church group in Edmonton. Also good news – we were starting to wonder if anyone else would use it?

We're saying a qualified good-bye to Kevin Thiessen as of the last board meeting when he informed us that he is stepping back from MDS board involvements. He indicates that he will stay on until a treasurer can be found for Region 5. Kevin has been involved with MDS Alberta for many years – many of them as chair. He has been involved with the Region 5 executive for the last 3 years as well. His valuable contributions to MDS are appreciated and we here in Alberta are thankful for him.

Our present board consists of (north to south) Peter Goertzen, Philip Wiebe, Glenn Kauffman, Bert Hamm, Larry Pauls, Vern Mack, Garry Wiens, Kevin Thiessen, Harold Friesen, Susan Thiessen (MCC Alberta Board Rep), Don Plett, Eddy Kornelsen, Henry Warkentin, Jim Dyck

At our last meeting we discussed our MDS Alberta values and I note them for your information. We help people in desperate need caused by natural disasters in Alberta. We send people out-of-province and cover their costs to help people in need caused by natural disasters. We are not “looking for work”, however we will respond to needs meeting MDS criteria. We do not consider medical conditions or systemic deficiencies to be natural disasters. When disasters do meet MDS criteria, we will be there.

Harold Friesen
MDS AB Chair

Saskatchewan Unit report October 2009

This year there have been no big problems. The Saskatchewan board has been working on the 2010 all unit meetings. We have good volunteers to lead the various groups. Everything seems to be falling into place.

We have not found anyone to take the chairperson's job on the board. We will be having a board meeting towards the end of November.

A small group of us went to Swift Current and checked out their Tim Horton's. Since we were there anyway, we stopped in where we are planning on holding a youth project in 2010. There is a lot of planning that needs to take place before we can commit to the project.

A group of 23 people went back on the 19th and 20th of October to re-shingle the main house, build a new deck, replace tub, sink, toilet and ceramic tiles in the washroom. There was a lot of yard work done. It was a couple of days of hard work and good fellowship.

Ed Buhler
Unit chairperson