

Creswell man heads to Harvey-hit Texas with supplies

Dan O'Reilly collects donations, funds to bring to hurricane-ravaged Texas

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When the waters rushed into Texas on August 25, the country held its breath at the images coming out of Houston. Hurricane Harvey forced families to their rooftops as it dumped more than 50" of rain in the region—more than the state's average yearly rainfall—over the course of two days. News reports dispatched images of boats on freeways and residents begging for help. Now, Creswell resident Dan O'Reilly is answering those pleas.

The handyman is packing his 28-foot trailer with donations from Creswell and surrounding communities and heading to Corpus Christi, Texas on Saturday. Before he left though, he asked for more donations to cover the immense need in the flood zone.

"They need everything," he said. "I have a list but if someone personally thinks that there's something not on the list that they might need then please, donate those items as well," O'Reilly said.

O'Reilly took to social media, posting a list that included food, rain gear, blankets, solar lights, water pumps, kitty litter, cell phone charges, baby formula and diapers.

His plan was to head south on Saturday but not before stopping in Ridgefield, Washington collecting donations.

"We've been here for about 30 minutes and I would say we have about two cubic yards of donations and \$500 in checks," O'Reilly said.

It was his friend's sister in Washington who originally asked O'Reilly if he would be willing to join a convoy headed to Texas to help. Unable to sync schedules with the convoy, O'Reilly said he opted to use his work trailer to bring donations on his own.

"We're connected through the masonic lodge. I'm a member of the Cottage Grove lodge and I called down to the lodge in Corpus Christi," he said.

Master of the Corpus Christi lodge, David Herbert said he got a phone call out of the blue. "We've been working with the masonic fraternity brotherhood," he said. "We were lucky enough to be spared the water in Corpus Christi but it's four miles up the road from us. People can see on the news but the infrastructure is pretty bad and the kids in that area are being asked to register in different school districts."

The Category 4 hurricane made landfall on August 25 forcing more than 30,000 people to seek shelter in Houston. Just over 50 inches of rain hit the region as the storm continued to touch down throughout the weekend with winds up to 132 miles per hour. Clean-up and rescue efforts are expected to climb to \$190 billion. In comparison, Hurricane Katrina's costs hovered near \$50 billion. As of Friday, September 1, the death toll had reached 31, including veteran police officer Steve Perez, 60, and 41-year-old Colette Sulcer who was found with her three-year-old daughter clinging to her, alive.

O'Reilly's call for donations garnered over 90 replies including offers of more than 100 toothbrushes, bundles of diapers, clothes and other requested items.

He was at the Creswell BiMart on Friday from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. to collect donations he also took donations at Cottage Grove's Willie's Barber Shop.



Dan O'Reilly readies his 28-foot trailer to bring donations to Texas after Hurricane Harvey ravaged the area, dumping more than 50 inches in the state and forcing families from their homes. O'Reilly planned to leave Oregon on Saturday, September 1 and meet with the local Masonic Lodge in Texas to distribute the donations. Photos provided by Dan O'Reilly.



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