

# Erskine Fire

In the aftermath of the Erskine Fire, a local resident replaced his burned flag to signify the strength of our community and country.



PHOTO COURTESY: MARSHA SMITH

Total Personnel	2,079
Total Acres	45,388
Estimated Containment Date	Thursday June 30th, 2016 approx. 12:00 AM

## Shelter in the storm

**Kathe Malouf**  
Special to the Sun

As more than 1,700 firefighters continued their battle to contain the 43,000-acre Erskine Fire on the ground and in the air, residents who were forced out of their homes by the fast-moving flames remained at evacuation shelters and at the homes of friends and family trying to piece together what is left and what their next steps will be in an attempt to restore their lives.

Many of the residents who were evacuated from their homes at the onset of the Erskine Fire were at the American Red Cross evacuation shelter set up at Kernville Elementary School. Displaced residents waited anxiously for news that they could return to their homes, and wondered if they had a home to return to.

The Red Cross initially set up their evacuation shelter in Lake Isabella, but relocated it to the Kernville Elementary School on Thursday evening. The following day, a second shelter was set up at St. Jude's Church in Wofford Heights in order to accommodate the increasing number of evacuees.

About 100 residents were staying at the temporary emergency shelter in Kernville, while the shelter in Wofford Heights had 27 registered on Saturday evening. Both shelters provide a place to sleep, three meals a day, water and someone to talk to, which is important for many of the evacuees. Because pets are not allowed inside the shelters, many residents opted to stay outside with their pets.

Ed and Kay Baker wanted to stay close to their dogs, and decided to stay and sleep in their cars. The couple said everything they own is currently packed in their two cars, as their home on Goat Ranch Road was destroyed in the fire. Kay Baker said they didn't have time to grab much as the fire topped the hill and quickly headed their way.

"By the time we got the dogs in our two cars, the smoke alarms were going off inside the house and it was full of smoke. You could hear the crackle of the fire. We left with the clothes we had on. I tried to get the cat, but I couldn't," Kay said pointing to her badly scratched arms. Ed was able to grab his Bible.

Because they have two large and three small dogs, they cannot stay at a motel, so they are sleeping in their cars with their dogs.

"We have each other and our dogs, everything else is gone," Kay said. The Bakers had insurance and they have already filed a claim. They said they will not rebuild; rather, they will be moving once the insurance is settled.

Kay said that they were talking about moving to Texas shortly before the fire. "We thought about it but thought we

through fire-lined roads and how residents tried to save the homes of their neighbors were shared at the shelter. As the names of those who had lost their homes circulated through the school, residents could only offer comfort to one another. Then there are those who felt guilty because their home survived while many around them did not.

Mike and Sherry Lanza's home on Piute Hills was spared by the fire, while four neighboring homes were reduced to ash. "I feel very guilty,"



PHOTO COURTESY: MARSHA SMITH

several insurance companies were on hand at Kernville School with claims adjusters to help residents file claims.

Kellee Scott of Farmers Insurance said that by Sunday morning, they had filed approximately 150 claims. Scott was also facilitating donated items. The Red Cross did not want the items collected or distributed at the school site, so Scott was making arrangements for a truckload of animal supplies that were due to arrive on Sunday. A shipment of hay, dog food, bowls, leashes, beds, kennels, and other animal supplies were taken to Jake's Place on Sierra Way in Kernville.

At the shelter in Wofford Heights, Jessica Piffero, public information officer with the American Red Cross

said the shelter provides an immediate need. "We know it will be a long road to recovery. We do what we can to make people as comfortable as possible. We will be here as long as there is a need." She added that some of their volunteers live in the evacuation zones. "So this fire is very personal to our team."

As the Bakers poured water on their big dog named "Bear" under a shade tree in the hot afternoon temperatures, Kay said despite the loss of their home, they were blessed to have escaped the fire with their dogs and each other. Ed said they will let God decide where they will go from here. "We don't have anything to pack, so we are ready," Kay said trying to smile.



PHOTO COURTESY: KATHE MALOUF

were too old to pack up, but now, we don't have to pack because there is nothing left. God made our decision for us," she said.

Angie Attencio and her dog "Charlie" were forced to flee her home in Weldon shortly after the fire broke out Thursday afternoon. She was able to grab some clothing, her lap top and food for Charlie. She said she has learned that her home survived and hoping that the winds would not shift and bring the flames back around. Without cell service, she said getting updated information is difficult.

Stories of evacuations

Representatives from

Sherry said. The Lanza's are staying in their motorhome at Rivernook Campground in Kernville, along with neighbors who lost their home. "I don't know what to say or do for them, so I just listen."

Sherry was in Bakersfield when the fire broke out. "Mike called me and told me about the fire, and you could see the plume of smoke from Bakersfield". Mike stayed at their home until about 11 p.m. that first night trying to wet down their home and a neighbor's home. He finally evacuated leaving with their motorhome, dog and cat.



PHOTO COURTESY: CALI RYAN



PHOTO COURTESY: JORDAN ACOSTA



PHOTO COURTESY: RON SMITH



PHOTO COURTESY: JUSTIN COEFIELD



PHOTO COURTESY: GEROGE STAH



# Time Line

- 6/23 ~3:30 p.m. Fire started
- 6/23 3:52 p.m. KCFD and USFS respond to fire
- 6/23 ~4:30 Cell towers taken out on Cook Peak
- 6/23 ~4:30 First Flame Retardant Tanker Arrived in Isabella
- 6/23 ~4:42 Evacuation in Mt. Mesa and Squirrel Valley
- 6/23 ~4:42 Evacuations in South Lake
- 6/23 ~4:50 Fire spreads, taking out utilities
- 6/23 ~5:00 First B10 Tanker Arrived in Isabella
- 6/23 5:18 p.m. KCFD states more than 200 acres burning
- 6/23 5:29 p.m. KCFD confirms multiple structures destroyed in Squirrel Valley
- 6/23 5:45 p.m. Red Cress sets up evacuation center at Senior Center
- 6/23 6:45 p.m. 1,500 acres. 18 structures lost
- 6/23 8:13 p.m. 2,000 acres, 0% contained. 50-60 structures lost
- 6/23 10:12 p.m. SCE reports 8,800 residents without power
- 6/23 10:16 p.m. 350 personnel
- 6/23 11:09 p.m. 5,000 acres. 0% contained
- 6/23 10:25 p.m. Red Cross announces moving evacuation center to Kernville Elementary
- 6/24 5:00 a.m. Press conference @ Fire Station 72
- 6/24 5:25 a.m. 100 structures lost
- 6/24 6:12 a.m. 8,000 acres
- 6/24 6:20 a.m. SR 178 closed at SR 155 and Sierra Way
- 6/24 Boil and do not drink notices issued by Cal Water for certain areas
- 6/24 8:17 a.m. 350 Personnel
- 6/24 10:08 a.m. 19,034 acres. Lake Isabella under precautionary evacuation
- 6/24 11:34 a.m. 600 personnel
- 6/24 12:13 p.m. KCFD confirms two fatalities
- 6/24 1:16 p.m. 800 Personnel
- 6/24 5:00 p.m. Hospital evacuation declared (not directly due to fire) but never took place
- 6/24 Governor Brown declares state of emergency in Kern County
- Fire spreads to Kelso Valley
- 6/25 35,700 acres. 0% contained. 150 structures destroyed. 75 damaged.
- 6/25 12:00 p.m. AT&T brings emergency cellular tower
- 6/25 6:00 p.m. Public meeting @ Woodrow Wallace Elementary
- 6/26 7:00 a.m. 36,810 acres & 10% contained. 1,712 personnel
- 6/26 7:30 a.m. Power restored to Weldon and South Lake
- 6/26 2:00 p.m. SCE announces power restored to most areas
- 6/26 7:30 p.m. Kern Emergency Operations Center established
- 6/26 8:00 p.m. 43,460 acres. 40% contained. 2,079 personnel
- 6/27 10:00 a.m. 45,388 acres. 40% contained. 2,079 personnel
- 6/27 10:00 a.m. Re-population meeting at County office of Emergency Services in Bakersfield
- 6/27 11:15 a.m. SR 178 re-opened
- 6/27 12:00 p.m. Kern County Emergency Operations Center announces re-entry plan. Squirrel Valley and South Lake remain closed.

Editor's Note: Times and acreage are estimates. Due to lack of records, some events may be out of order. Also, events are listed according to when alerts and press releases we sent and may not represent times that events actually occurred.



PHOTO COURTESY: CLAYTON HUCKABY



PHOTO COURTESY: JUSTIN COEFIELD



PHOTO COURTESY: RON SMITH

## Isabella Rising: Finding silver lining amidst ashes

**Jennifer Fanhauser**  
Special to the Sun

Finding the silver lining in a smoke cloud is not easy, yet this is what many Kern River Valley residents are doing after the Erskine Fire broke out last Thursday afternoon. As the blaze grew, evacuations were issued until Monday, with the exception of Squirrel Valley, South Lake, and Kelso Valley. Now, with danger less impending, residents are left with conflicting emotions.

One such resident is Richard Fankhauser, who realized the swift flow of flames through his and his neighbors' yards meant immediate evacuation as his neighborhood has only one exit. After driving his family to safety in Mt. Mesa, Fankhauser's attempted return to Squirrel Valley failed when firemen asked him to turn around. "The most frustrating part," said Fankhauser, "was not being able to get to my house—not being able to find out if it burned down or was still standing."

By Friday afternoon, Fankhauser heard the good news, but this was short-lived when he realized his longtime neighbor's house is now decimated. "They wouldn't let me back up," lamented Fankhauser, shaking his head. "I don't know if I could've done anything, but I sure would've tried."

This sentiment was shared by fellow community member Fred Roach, who stayed home attempting to help fight the fire and save his and his neighbors' homes. Once the fire died down, Roach said his area was left without water for a day and a half, without power and no way to receive news or get in touch with family. Hindered by a lack of resources and road closures, Roach looked for a new way to make an impact.

Along with many other volunteers, Roach is helping Candice Aguilar of Bakersfield with her efforts at Red Rooster in Mt. Mesa to operate as a donation center for all areas, as well as a daily barbecue for impacted families.

Aguilar stated that Squirrel Valley residents, particularly those displaced, had been left without resources, other than water from fire personnel. "They didn't have anything," stated Aguilar, indicating one man who was diabetic and, without the aid of Red Rooster, would not have had access to food. "Everyone cares here," said Aguilar, which was evident as volunteers worked with community members and others dropped off donations.

Efforts like these are welcome signs of positivity, especially for those unable to access their homes. The Hodge family of Squirrel Valley, for

instance, was out of town when the fire ignited. A frantic Chris Hodge remained concerned about whether his home and church, Victory Tabernacle, were standing until 7 p.m. last Thursday when he returned and heard all was well, except his bus—a small loss, he said, compared to what could have happened. Hodge stated, "I was more saddened than anything for the community and the people that I knew were going to lose their homes."

Still barred from home, like so many others, Hodge held a church service in Circle Park in Kernville to ease the community's fear and pain. Hodge also has plans to open his church as a donation center once power is restored to reach out to those affected by the fire. In all of this, Hodge commented of emergency personnel, "I'm certainly thankful... I know members of our community are very frustrated and we are, too, but they're just doing their jobs and they're looking out for our safety."

And perhaps that is the silver lining: in the wake of tragedy and confused emotions, communities from around the lake and farther have congregated in the valley to help ease each other's burdens and offer a ray of hope.



PHOTO COURTESY: SHANNON RAPOSE

## Drones: No Fly Zone

**Nikole Nuefield**  
Kern Valley Sun

During the Erskine Fire a drone (Unmanned Aerial Systems - UAS) incursion occurred which caused fire managers to ground all helicopters for safety, according to Inciweb, causing a 30 minute delay in helping fight the fire.

As the use of UAS, more commonly known as "drones", becomes increasingly popular among

the public, it is important that we understand and obey the current laws in place. While it may seem interesting and exciting to get a firsthand perspective of fire and devastation, it is also illegal, very dangerous to those fighting the fire, and impacts the ability to save lives and property by grounding aircraft.

Drones (UAS) of any weight or size are considered aircraft by the Federal

Aviation Administration (FAA) and are subject to FAA regulations. FFA Airspace Restrictions specifically state a drone (UAS) may not be flown within a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) space or over a wildfire. A short visit to [www.FFA.gov](http://www.FFA.gov) will provide a complete list all of the information one needs to safely and legally fly a drone.

Please remember, if you fly, they can't.



PHOTO COURTESY: I3.MIRROR.CO.UK

## Disaster Must-Haves

**Tresa Erickson**  
Special to the Sun

Hurricane or tornado. Wildfire or volcanic eruption. Avalanche or blizzard. Whatever the natural disaster, you need to be prepared, and two of the most important steps involve having a family communications plan and a disaster supply kit. Natural disasters can occur anytime, even when your family is not together. You might be at work, your spouse might be at the store, and your kids might be at school. That's why it is important that you have a family communications plan. The plan should include a point person for everyone to contact and a place to meet afterwards. The point person should live out of the affected region, if not the state. Everyone should have the person's phone number and call them as soon as possible after the disaster. The meeting place should be known to everyone

and easy to get to, and family members should go there as soon as they can. Along with a family communications plan, you will also need a disaster supply kit. You can buy the kit or make it yourself. It should include: • Three-day supply of water, a gallon for each person each day • Three-day supply of non-perishable food for each person • Manual can opener • Mess kit with cups, plates and utensils • First aid kit • Battery-powered radio with extra batteries • Flashlight with extra batteries • Cell phone with charger • Whistle to call for help • Matches • Fire extinguisher • Dust mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place • Towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation • Sleeping bag or blanket for each person • Change of clothing for each person • Cash or traveler's checks and change You might also want to include plain household bleach and a

medicine dropper. These could come in handy for treating water or disinfecting an area. For water treatment, use 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water. For sanitation purposes, use one part bleach to nine parts water. Depending upon who resides with you, you may need additional supplies, including medication and health aides, feminine supplies, infant food and diapers, and pet food. You should also gather all of your important papers and store them in a portable, waterproof container. Many experts also recommend you have a disaster supply kit for each car you own. Again, you never know where you will be when disaster strikes. You can buy kits specifically for autos or make them yourself. Natural disasters can strike anytime. Be prepared with a family communications plan and a disaster supply kit.



# Valley Response

*From Facebook*

All of my childhood memories came flooding back joined with tears. Thinking I just moved away from there 3 years ago, we lived in South Lake, up Goat Ranch. And to see the destruction of my old neighborhood was overwhelming. I constantly wondered if my childhood home where my granny raised me, my brother, and sister, was gone. To find the picture of the cross my brother made with cement and wrote our deceased loved ones names in the cement I stared at that for a very long time wondering if I'd ever see it again. Luckily, one day I will as that area wasn't destroyed. I worried about my friends, my family, my nieces live in Kelso and when it was said it was heading that way we panicked. As we couldn't get ahold of anyone. The pictures, the videos, the news to see and watch tore my heart to pieces. I told a few of my friends how bad it was they asked if we always had fires. I told them yes every summer, but never ever like this. My childhood fire memories are from 1980's, 90's and a few in 2000's. Always they were out within a few hours or 2 days. I remember the fire that traveled up behind Squirrel Valley in the 80's that traveled along the mountain all the way to Nichols Peak. My papa was alive during that fire. I remember sitting on the lawn chair in the middle of the road on Piute Mt. Road to watch it during the night. All these memories came flooding in when I saw the news when this first started. The pain will remain for a long time for many many folks. Especially those that have been there for many many years, generations, and have moved away the feeling and heartache of knowing we are not there to help out very own home town. It hurts the heart and mind a great deal. The tears will not stop flowing.

**Bridget Scoggan**  
Ridgecrest

My old home in Squirrel Valley still stands, but I am saddened by the loss of friends' homes and the destruction of the homes of so many of my former students and their parents. The Kern Valley was my home for over 30 years; I taught there, was involved in community activities there even after I moved away from there, but my heart is still there. I'll always remember my students and, in my mind's eye, still see the homes and streets as they existed when you WERE my students. This disaster is horrible, but our memories linger. This horribleness will become a part of that memory, but the good memories will live on.

**Chuck Smith**

While evacuating my home, the first thing that I noticed about the houses burning around me were not that they were burning, but that they were burning with such intensity. Flashbacks of driving through Mount Mesa from my house in Weldon to a friend's home or school came into my brain. I had always enjoyed the ride, looking at the animals grazing in the fields along highway 178, and simply just enjoying the beautiful county I live in. Comparing the ride that I used to love oh so much to the ride I must endure now, I feel as if something was taken from me. My beautiful little comfort ride is now burnt and covered in ashes. Although I have not been a lifelong resident of the Kern River Valley, I found joy in the simple things it had to offer, the comfort that it has and always will provide for me. It is devastating that our small little valley has suffered such a loss, but I know we are all strong enough to pull through this and come back even stronger.

**Alyssa Servin**  
Weldon

This was my grandparents home, my mom's home, my childhood home. I roamed the streets off of Goat Ranch as a kid. I would walk the quiet streets and get fruit from our neighbors. I would ride my bike down to the store and back. I would visit friends down the street and stay the night. It was a quiet community and felt so safe. My husband and I both grew up in the valley and we moved to Ridgecrest about 6 years ago. Both our parents are still there and we visit often. We've wanted to move back "home" for awhile now. Thursday night. Oh Thursday night. I saw the posts on Facebook about the fire and thought nothing of it. There's been lots of fires, they happen every year. I then saw the posts about how cell service was out and the fire was moving rapidly towards Squirrel Valley. I prayed the residents up there would be safe, again close calls have happened, but this time, this time was different. I was trying desperately to reach my mom. I then saw posts that it was hitting South Lake. I thought "no way it could get all the way to my mom's". I was wrong. I continued to desperately try to contact her. The fear of not knowing was so overwhelming. My husband found a live feed of the fire from the fire department liaison. He showed parts of Squirrel Valley that were getting hit, and I was worried for friends homes, then he traveled to South Lake. I'll never forget those images. I sat helplessly in my living room safe in Ridgecrest. I watched my childhood burn. The streets I used to roam were covered in flames. He couldn't even drive up close to where my mom's house was due to the flames. My heart sank in that moment. I knew my childhood home, the home my grandparents had lived in, the home my mom still lived in, was gone. The quiet safe streets were no longer quiet and safe. I cried and panicked in Ridgecrest until I finally heard from my mom. We cried together, but I knew she was safe. I may not have lived up there anymore, but it was still home, and always will be. Seeing the outpouring from the community in the valley along with surrounding areas has been so uplifting. Despite all the tragedy and loss, I see all the love and compassion coming out in people. The things that made the valley wonderful didn't burn away, the amazing people are still there. Tears will still fall for awhile, and I'll hold onto my fond memories and work to create new ones. Rebuilding comes next and the community will be stronger. This time will never be forgotten. It has left a deep imprint on all our hearts, but everyone will get through because despite everything, we still have each other.

**Olivia Higgins**  
Ridgecrest

So it was so scary when the fire took over the hospital! Saying bye to the residents as they were being evacuated was so sad! We went and delivered snacks and water to people stuck in Mt. Mesa, Squirrel Valley, South Lake, etc. Today and those people were so happy over little things like a case of water and popartars!!! The devastation was awful but the courage these people showed was amazing!!!! Being at the hospital for 30 hours was fine, because I love this community and making sure people were safe was number 1 priority. I was shocked that it moved so fast, and when it got to the back door of the hospital it was honestly very scary. I never thought the hospital would ever have such a close call with fire. The hospital staff where amazing, everyone really banded together to make sure the residents were safe.

**Peter Heil**  
Wofford Height

In the last 5 days I have witnessed the most horrific and saddening things that will stick in my mind for the rest of my life. We have all witnessed something we could never imagine as residents of the Kern River Valley; such heart break and sorrow to so many residences, along with the loss of lives during this horrific fire. Through the entire time, from Thursday evening until now, I have seen so many helpful residents, businesses, evacuees themselves and complete strangers from other areas step up and contribute to helping those who either lost everything or are evacuated from their homes. It has brought me to tears so many times to see how people are helping in so many ways. It has also made me realize there are still so many wonderful people in this crazy world we live in. My family and I are personally grateful and blessed to the Los Padres fire crew who saved our home and to all fire fighters who risked their lives during this catastrophe. As we are able to return to our home hopefully sometime soon, we will witness other residents and neighbors who were not as lucky, have to rebuild from the ground up. I have faith that they will all be helped in more ways than they can imagine during this time of transition and sadness. We pray for each and every person who has either lost a home or has been displaced for the time being until they are allowed back in their homes. ! It has truly been an eye opener and shown us to be grateful for the things you have, because in a matter of seconds, it can all be taken away from you. God bless and thank you to everyone who has shown so much compassion and love to us and everyone around the valley, we are truly blessed to live here.

**Amanda Hagey**  
Squirrel Valley



PHOTO COURTESY: JUSTIN COEFIELD



PHOTO COURTESY: SARAH ROOFFENER



PHOTO COURTESY: SHANNON RAPOSE

## Burned, but not broken

**Geroge Stahl**  
Special to the Sun

The spectrum of the human spirit is for the most part, a resilient one. However, when something like the Erskine Fire strikes, this kind of devastation can be the breaking point for some people. In others, it stirs emotions of tremendous loss, followed by a sense of survival. Overall, most of the victims were given a strength that came from the loving and caring community of the Kern River Valley and our neighbors from all points of the compass. All of a sudden, a fabulous outpouring of concern and an attitude of wanting to help, flooded the KRV. Donations of food, clothing, and toiletries came rushing into the many places that set up collections. Places like the Elks Club, the Rotary Club, The Kern River Revitalization and the churches of the valley that set up distribution points. Ridgecrest, Tehachapi, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, Taft and others sent truckloads of supplies into the valley. The gifts weren't limited to the people affected by the fire either.

Donations of dog food, cat food, blankets and food for horses all came with them for the many animals that were displaced.

Several anonymous survivors of the Erskine Fire that lost their homes commented on their view of the aftermath and destruction left by the flames and smoke.

One man and his wife whose home was burnt to the ground simply said, 'We'll just rebuild. We can't take too much time dwelling on it, we just need to move on.'

Another woman said that she has to focus on the future. 'If I start thinking about it, it just makes me cry. I can't help it when I am alone, so I try to stay with other people. We talk about the future, not the past. There were too many things in my house, that if I start to think about them, I can't handle it.'

There is a couple who are in their sixties and seventies who said, 'Unfortunately this kind of loss is not new to us. We had a house that was lost in the Bull Fire. We learned then that the only thing to think about is the future. We can either start over

here, or we can move out of California. It's all up in the air right now.'

Another man, who watched his house burn said, 'It's only stuff. We have our lives and we can rebuild and get more stuff. Fortunately, my wife likes getting more stuff.'

Others, who had not had homeowners insurance were not so sure about their futures. For them, the future was not as clear. Without the idea of some sort of compensation for their loss many said, 'I don't know what I am going to do now.'

All prejudice, all ill feelings that anyone may have had towards another all disappeared this past week. As we all came together and came to the aid of our fellow KRV residents, we all became one people. Everyone living in the valley realized that this could happen to any of us, in any corner of the valley. That alone is what ties us all together and reminds us how we can count on one another. United, we are fortified and can endure in the most devastating of times. This is a testimony to the American spirit.



PHOTO COURTESY: JUSTIN COEFIELD



PHOTO COURTESY: JUSTIN COEFIELD



“Prayers for everyone affected and for all the firefighters. I was not affected physically by the fire as i dont live there anymore but i was affected mentally by it.”  
- Bryan Klaus

“Fills my heart with joy hearing stories like these! All we’ve been through and we still stand strong! Amazing.”  
- Amanda Barnhart

“My husband Tim Conner stayed and defended our home through the night. So did many of our neighbors in Squirrel Valley. He is definitely my hero!”  
- Mer Conner

“It felt like zombieland... cut off from the world, not knowing where your loved ones were or if they were ok, people looting and running for their lives with little or no warning...”  
- Samantha Mitchell

“I have enjoyed seeing the generosity of those I do and do not know and the sacrifices some are making for the good of others. It is beautiful. Sad. Beautiful. Tragic. Sums it up.”  
- Jessica Benson

“I was able to locate my family from afar, and get them supplies. I am heart broken that I cannot be there. But I am forever grateful for all of the volunteers, the KCSO and all of the fire fighters. THANK YOU!”  
- RJ Murray

“It breaks my heart I have been distraught being so far away and not there for [my family]. As I am in TN.”  
- Jessica Aydelott

“I don’t live there or have family there, but I love it up there just the same. I’ve been camping on the Kern since I was a kid and people have always been hospitable up there. It saddens me to see them go through this. I have MUCH respect for fire & police crews that have worked non-stop to put this fire to an end.”  
- Craig M Hiebert

“Heartbroken - hopeful”  
- Valentina Marie Alvarez-Rodorigo

“I was wanting to charge right in and fix everything.”  
- Sheryl Fournier

“I’m overwhelmed at the compassion all the neighboring communities have shown our valley.”  
- Maar Crabtree

“We are a very small community but we have a heart of a lion and though it’s going to take years to rebuild. WE WILL REBUILD. This community will be stronger than ever.”  
- Urrka Blunt

“I was confident in our firefighters and deputy sheriffs. I had a stressful led sleepless two night ready to evacuate at a moment’s notice I am thankful my home was not directly impacted and feel sad for those who must rebuild Condolences to those who lost their lives.”  
- Loren A Vancleef

“It just brings me to tears to know that others care and come to the aid of those in need , especially at such a devastating blow our valley has been dealt.”  
- Maar Crabtree

“I’ve been in tears bc I have loved all these areas! Many memories! Breaks my heart bc I can’t do anything to help. I wish I was able to! I worried a lot for many of my families up there! I couldn’t reach them in five days! I am grateful that most of them are ok.”  
- Shannon Hicks

“I was worry about the rate the houses and land was going up in flames my friends and family members who live in the midst of the fire area.”  
- Sheryl Fournier

“But through this tragedy comes some positivity! Community’s all over the state have come to our aid and offered so many donations and help its amazing!”  
- Amanda Barnhart

“I am truly amazed by the love and support this community has had for its citizens during this time and it has given me a new outlook on life, love, family and community. Thank you Kern River Valley for showing me that there are people who still have true love in their hearts. God Bless KRV!”  
- Bianca King

“I’m devastated to see all of this but I know that in tragic situations like these that our town will pull through and come out on top.”  
- Melanie Nicole Long

“We want to thank the Sheriff’s Department for checking on our Uncle and Aunt. They were so kind and so quick. We raised our children in Kern River Valley and still have such love for all. Prayers from Oregon”  
- Hedrick Phil Linda

“I had just moved away from there. I was living w my uncle in squirrel valley. We were very close with our neighbors! When we got the call we were devastated!”  
- Amber Constantine

