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WV VOAD meeting coming up March 6

WV VOAD and its member agencies will meet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **March 6** at St. Thomas Catholic Church, 624 Kanawha St., in Gassaway.

Additional quarterly meeting dates are set for:

- ♦ June 5
- ♦ Sept. 11
- ♦ Dec. 4

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Voluntary organizations brave winter weather to build new homes for flood survivors

BELLE, W.VA. — Even during snow and ice storms in many parts of the state, West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (WV VOAD) and its member agencies are working in several counties to build new homes for survivors of the June 2016 flood.

WV VOAD and its member agencies have built and funded new homes in all 11 counties where flood damage occurred, and repair projects in all those counties are ongoing. Right now, volunteers are on site and have been working throughout the winter in Kanawha, Clay, Nicholas and Greenbrier counties building new homes for 10 families who were displaced.

Construction work is ongoing or about to be completed on homes in Clendenin, Richwood, White Sulphur Springs, Caldwell, Rainelle and Procious.

All these homes, which range from 900 square feet to 1,100 square feet in size, have been funded by donations and built by volunteer labor even as snow flies and temperatures have dropped below freezing.

Continuing the building process over the winter was difficult, but important to help get families back into safe, secure and sanitary housing and get their lives back together as quickly as possible. It took plenty of logistical planning and cooperation between WV VOAD and its member agencies.



WV VOAD and its member agencies worked throughout the winter months to build this new home for flood survivors in Rainelle.

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“Our volunteer teams spent time at the end of last year, before the ground froze, doing as much prep work as possible, digging foundations and getting sites ready so we could do the finishing work even when weather was bad,” said Cathy Rennard, Disaster Case Management Supervisor for WV VOAD.

Volunteers with WV VOAD’s member agencies have come from around the country, as far as Kansas, Michigan, Maine and Illinois, to help with these particular rebuilding projects.

“Volunteers understand that when they come to West Virginia in the winter months, there is going to be snow on the ground,” said Sara Hambrick, WV VOAD Disaster Case Manager Supervisor. “They aren’t here to sit in hotel rooms. They are here to work, and when they’re here, they just want to accomplish as much as they possibly can.”

At times, when weather-related challenges occur, local volunteers and officials with county long-term recovery groups step in to assist with transportation and other logistical issues.

WV VOAD and its member agencies have been on the ground since the June 2016 flood assisting with cleanup, rebuilding and with the long-term recovery needs of survivors. The flood, which left 23 people dead and more than 3,000 homes destroyed, was declared a federal disaster.

“Logistically, it takes time to work through the cases based on the vulnerability of the clients,” Rennard said. “The majority of these flood survivors have had multiple challenges to work through, from financial hardship to age and physical disabilities.”

Each new home that’s now being built costs between \$55,000 and \$70,000. Families were required to invest any money they received in federal grants in the construction and the rest came from private donations, philanthropic foundations and contributions from WV VOAD member agencies.

“A lot of hard work is being done around the state and we appreciate all of our voluntary organizations and their dedication to work with us during the winter months,” WV VOAD Executive Director Jenny Gannaway said. “Our goal is to stay focused on the families so that every family is back in safe, secure and sanitary housing.”



This Richwood home is near completion thanks to voluntary organizations that worked during the winter months to get construction done.



Check it out!

WV VOAD has created a great new video explaining more about our mission, goals and all the ways we can help in every phase of a disaster. It’s a wonderful tool to learn more about the organization and our member agencies, especially for those just now becoming familiar with WV VOAD and those who want to know more. Check it out on our website, <https://wvvoad.org/about/>, and share with your friends!



Letter from the Director

Once again this month, WV VOAD and our member agencies are responding to flooding around the state. Gov. Jim Justice declared a State of Emergency in all 55 counties on Sat., Feb. 17. WV VOAD and its member agencies were ready to respond to whatever needs arose.

Member agencies immediately sprang into action to assist families affected by high water. Among their efforts, Appalachian Outreach delivered 50 buckets and cleaning supplies to Ohio County, Community Lutheran Partners provided volunteers and the American Red Cross delivered clean-up kits and helped survey affected areas. The Salvation Army in Wheeling sheltered families who were displaced. The West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church also delivered buckets and cleaning supplies and Team Rubicon sent a recon team to the area. Other agencies stood ready if needed.

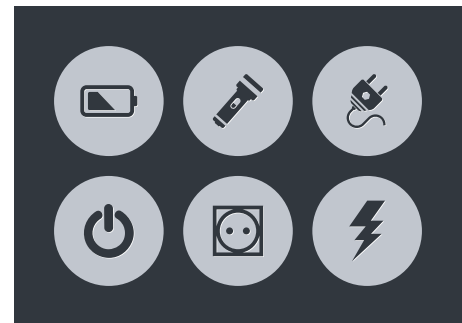
WV VOAD has some great members, and I appreciate their readiness and willingness to help whenever needed. Together, we will continue to help West Virginians stay safe during these events and help with recovery afterward.

Sincerely,
Jenny Gannaway, Executive Director

TIP: Be smart before (and during) a power outage

A power outage is enough of an inconvenience. Don't let a lack of electricity lead to dangerous mistakes around the house. Be prepared before the lights go out.

- Use flashlights for lighting. Candles can cause fires if left unattended.
- Food kept in a refrigerator can be kept for about four hours if the door remains closed and in a full, unopened freezer for 48 hours.
- Never use your oven as a source of heat.
- If the power may be out for a longer period of time, plan to go to another location such as a family member's or friend's house that has heat.
- Consider surge protectors to protect computers and other appliances from momentary power surges.
- Only use generators away from your home, and never run one inside the home or garage. Consult an electrician or engineer before purchasing and installing a generator.
- Build or restock your emergency preparedness kit, and make sure you have a way to charge your phone or any other necessary device that requires power.



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WV VOAD is a humanitarian association of independent organizations that may be active in all phases of disaster. Its mission is to identify unmet needs and facilitate efficient streamlined service delivery to those imperiled or impacted by disaster while eliminating duplication of effort through cooperation, coordination, communication, collaboration in the four phases of disaster: preparation, response, recovery and mitigation.

West Virginia is a member of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

Spotlight: Catholic Charities strives to help flood survivors over the long haul

“Catholic Charities West Virginia Disaster Services program is always working to find ways to help in disaster recovery,” said Lora Pierce, Director of Disaster Services.

Catholic Charities has had a long-standing partnership with WV VOAD member agencies and has actively contributed funds and provided case management for many disasters over the years.

The June 2016 flood was unprecedented. Catholic Charities West Virginia’s donors and Parishes of the Diocese of Wheeling Charleston and surrounding diocese raised more than a million dollars for flood response. CCWV developed a plan to ensure this financial support reached each of the 12 counties where flood damage occurred through the eight Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) that formed. Each LTRC has received \$5,000 every three months for case managers to provide direct assistance for unmet needs of flood survivors. That financial support is slated to continue at least through June of this year.

The funds already have assisted in the recovery of nearly 300 households in Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Nicholas, Roane, Summers, and Webster counties. Among those helped was a man in Fayette County who was living in a storage shed after the flood destroyed his home.

In Greenbrier County, a firefighter who spent the night of June 23, 2016 in a boat helping rescue people from high water returned to find five feet of water in his own home.

And in Clay County, a family of five (including a child with several medical conditions and physical handicaps) was living in a camper after mountain run-off from the flood destroyed their home.

CCWV Disaster Case Manager Janet Kelley has been working with families through disaster recovery in West Virginia for more than 15 years. Disaster case management is crucial for establishing a recovery plan, verifying duplication of benefits, and helping families work their way to full recovery from disasters.



A family of five, including three children, lost their Clay County home in the June 2016 flood. They were living in a camper until Catholic Charities and other WV VOAD agencies helped secure funding for a new mobile home.

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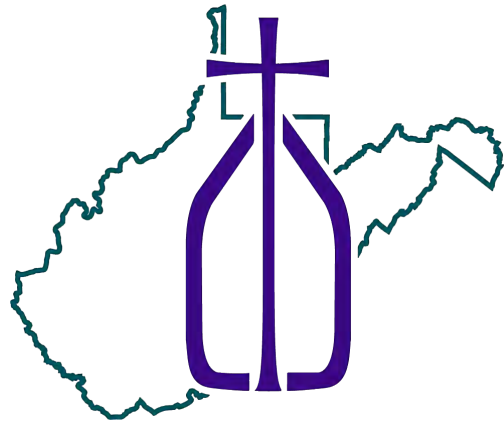
Spotlight: Catholic Charities, cont. from 4

Janet worked with many families and individuals who were affected by the June 2016 flood. She is now working with families in northern counties who are recovering from the July 2017 flood.

Catholic Charities West Virginia, in partnership with multiple disaster services agencies, has helped with home repairs, HVAC installations, bridge replacements, and to help secure new housing for those nearly 300 survivors. Pierce said it's the collaboration between so many agencies that helps CCWV be effective in recovery.

"Catholic Charities of West Virginia is one of many wonderful organizations in West Virginia who respond to disaster," Pierce said. "From rescue and first responders to funders and long-term recovery, none of us can do it independently. West Virginia has a strong network of organizations providing disaster services who help individuals and families from the beginning to the end of disaster recovery."

Looking forward, she said, "Catholic Charities WV cares for all the people of our state. We continue to assess the areas of need for disaster services in West Virginia and strive to provide support where we can best serve given our resources and our capacity."



WV VOAD provides water after Nicholas County outage



West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (WV VOAD) was able to provide drinking water to a Nicholas County community that faced a major water outage last month.

The Public Service District serving the communities of Nettie, Leivasy and Canvas had a perfect storm of events that led to a four-day water outage beginning Jan. 16.

"It was a combination of things," said Nicholas County Commission President Ken Altizer.

With temperatures below zero at the time, a water line suffered two large breaks. At the same time, several of the PSD's tanks went dry and needed to be refilled in order to flush tank filters, which had become clogged with muck and debris after earlier heavy rains, Altizer said.

"They needed to fill the tank before they could flush it and there wasn't enough water to do that," he said. "In the process nobody had drinking water."

The Nicholas County Commission decided to purchase water and distribute it to the 1,400 households that were without water, but frigid weather and snow meant delivery trucks hadn't made it to many local retailers and their bottled water supplies were low.

"The only place that had water was a mine supply place and we bought everything they had," Altizer said. "It didn't last long."

That's when WV VOAD stepped in, in coordination with county and state emergency services officials, and donated about 276 cases of bottled water to residents.

"It was gone in about three hours," Altizer said. "It was very, very helpful, and we certainly appreciate it."

The outage lasted about four days, and residents were under a boil-water advisory for another four days after service was restored, Altizer said.

WV VOAD got involved after being contacted by the state Emergency Operations Center about the water crisis. WV VOAD then worked with an area Lowe's to get a discounted price on cases of bottled water and to coordinate delivery to affected residents.

"We are grateful for the ability to work with local agencies and area businesses to provide such vital services during a community's time of need," said Jenny Gannaway, WV VOAD's executive director.





New bridge changes life for Clay County family

Clinton Nichols sometimes catches a glimpse of the brand new bridge that connects his house to the rest of the world and he does a double-take.

"I stand here and stare out the window and still can't believe it," said Nichols, whose family's Clay County home and old access bridge were severely damaged in the June 2016 flood.

"I've got an absolutely first-class bridge over here and I just want to stand here and look at it," he said. "It is fantastic and overwhelming."



WV VOAD and its member agencies dedicated Nichols' new private bridge in Prociuous in January. The structure, a success of the WV VOAD Bridge Project, provided the Nichols family with a reliable route to their home for the first time since the 2016 flood. Since then, to get back and forth to their home, they were forced to wait for the creek to get low and then attempt to drive across it, using a neighbor's property for access.

"This a family that manicured their yard, had it so nice, and here I've got a muddy road down through it," Nichols said. "It was hard to ask them, but they offered and I really had to take them up on it. Every time it rained it was just as soft as could be, and I blew an engine in my car going across the water when it was a little high."

The Nichols family secured some funds to replace their private span, but struggled to find a contractor to do the work. Nichols attempted to make repairs himself and broke his hip in the process.

That's when WV VOAD stepped in to coordinate the rebuilding project.

"It was good news, but more than good news," said Nichols. "I was laying in the hospital bed when my wife told me VOAD was gonna help. I've always been on the giving end, not the receiving end, and it was a little tough having to rely on other people."

Construction was done in December by volunteers with Mennonite Disaster Services — a member agency of WV VOAD — and the work was funded by the United Way of Central West Virginia and Stump Chapel Church in Tesla.

Volunteers built the bridge, from start to finish, in just about a week, and Nichols said he was stunned by the efficiency of the operation.

"They were so smooth, you would have thought they were an absolutely experienced crew that did that every day," Nichols said. "They came in there and it just came together like it was fast-motion."

"The volunteers that were here, especially, they were just crazy about what they were accomplishing," he said. "They were asking what else they could do — 'I've got a little time on my hands, do you need anything?'"

WV VOAD Executive Director Jenny Gannaway said, "It is gratifying to see how much of a difference all the work of WV VOAD and its member agencies has made in the lives of this family. We could not continue to accomplish all that we do without the tireless work of volunteers or the organizations that help fund these crucial projects."

The WV VOAD Bridge Project, honored as National VOAD's 2016 Innovative Program of the Year, is an effort by WV VOAD, and supported by government agencies, businesses, community groups and volunteers, to rebuild private bridges that were destroyed or damaged during flooding. The program has now completed 46 bridges in nine counties.

To donate to the bridge project or to volunteer, contact Benjamin Cisco at benjamincisco@wvvoad.org.



Agency Reports

WV VOAD member agencies donate time, funds and materials to flood cleanup, recovery and rebuilding around the state. Here's what a few of them have been doing!



Ten to 12 volunteers with **Brethren Disaster Ministries** from Pennsylvania are spending a week this month **repairing five homes** in Clay and Kanawha counties that were damaged during the June 2016 flood. The volunteers will be working on homes in Clay, Procious, Hartland and Bomont and in the Clendenin area. They'll be doing everything from painting and cabinetry work to installing drywall, bathroom fixtures and flooring.



Volunteers with **Appalachia Service Project** and **World Renew** are nearly finished **building a new home** for flood survivors in Rainelle. With additional construction funds provided by a local donor, a family who was displaced in the June 2016 flood should be moved into their new home by the end of the month. A home dedication is set for **Feb. 28**.



With funding from the **United Way**, **Appalachia Service Project** is finishing **construction of the sixth new home in Faith Villas**, the Richwood community for flood survivors created by **Neighbors Loving Neighbors**. A senior citizen whose home was destroyed during the June 2016 flood will be moving in soon, and a home dedication is set for **March 14**.

If your agency would like to be featured in future Agency Reports, please send information to wvvoad@gmail.com.



Four members of the Chapel Hill Church of God and Lighthouse Church of God from Adams County, Penn. have made two trips to Clendenin to rebuild a home damaged in the June 2016 flood. Their January visit was spontaneous; they said they felt the Lord directing them to return, discussed it and were on the road within hours. They finished painting, installed kitchen countertops, a toilet and bathroom and did trim work. In December, they worked on the wiring and plumbing. Thank you again to our member agencies for your support as we work together to help West Virginians recover!



WVVOAD and its member agencies are always working to help West Virginians recover and rebuild after disasters.

For more information and photos, visit our website, www.wvvoad.org.



Team Orwigsburg, a Pennsylvania nonprofit, is prefabricating bridges to install this spring for the WVVOAD Bridge Project. The group builds the bridges in its warehouse and then transports them to flood survivors.



The West Virginia United Methodist Disaster Recovery team spent a team work day this month building a new back door landing and stairs on a new home for flood survivors in Clendenin.



A Disaster Case Management Program case manager was able to secure funding to help a Clay County homeowner replace the septic system on her property. The homeowner, who lives in the Elk River Road area, had more than two feet of water in her home during the June 2016 flood.