

City remains actively involved with evacuee support

May 9, 2016

The City of Edmonton continues its active involvement in providing accommodation, food and services to thousands of evacuees from the wildfires of northern Alberta.

City workers are working 24-7 to help manage a massive wave of donations, assist evacuees with travel, health and pet care arrangements, and help house and feed those without alternate accommodation. The work continues into week two of the emergency even though fewer evacuees are now staying at the City's Emergency Reception Centre.

"The willingness of City employees - along with the citizens of Edmonton - to help evacuees facing such severe loss and dislocation has been absolutely heart-warming," says Rob Brekke, Coordinator of the reception centre. "There was an immediate response to meet evacuees' most urgent needs, and now we're on track to help our guests navigate some of their other challenges in the coming days and weeks."

Edmonton's emergency response includes:

- City staff have registered 11,030 people at the reception centre since the wildfires began. They are currently accommodating 569 people at the centre, down from a high of 2,000 on May 6.
- The number of meals served at the City's Emergency Reception Centre on Mother's Day, May 8, totalled 5,382.
- 92 City firefighters have covered shifts in and around Fort McMurray, supported by 6 mechanics, two pumper trucks and two tanker trucks. Two Fire Rescue employees specializing in mental wellness are providing support to Edmonton and Fort McMurray firefighters.
- About 800 City employees have signed on for shifts on a 24-hour rotation at the reception centre. More have been working the same shifts at the Emergency Operations Centre that coordinates the overall City response.
- 500 Transit transfers have been given to evacuees to help them travel around the city.
- Citizen Services has provided free admission for evacuees to all City recreation centres and three attractions (Muttart Conservatory, Valley Zoo, John Janzen Nature Centre).
- City workers are helping coordinate major donations trucked or flown in from cities ranging from Vancouver to Cranbrook to Toronto. Items include cots, blankets, new clothing and much more.
- Animal Care and Control workers have provided short-term and long-term care to more than 350 pet animals at the reception centre to date. Five Community Standards Peace Officers are en route to Fort McMurray at the request of the Provincial Operations Centre, to help find animals and bring them back to Edmonton. This effort is led by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (as directed by POC) and the Alberta SPCA.

Media contact:

City of Edmonton Emergency Operations Centre - Media Team
780-944-6428
eoc.info@edmonton.ca
www.edmonton.ca/HelpingFortMac

Share:     

3rd Floor, City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square NW
Edmonton, AB
T5J 2R7
www.edmonton.ca

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