

Disaster response and partner organizations gathered for annual conference “Moving Forward Together” in Salt Lake City

Organized by Mountain West Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, attendees from many states dedicating themselves to work as a team in disasters

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, April 19, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Over a hundred volunteers and disaster experts attended the [Mountain West VOAD](#) (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) annual conference, “Moving Forward Together,” held in Salt Lake City.

Keynote speaker, Mr. Marcus Coleman, Director of the Department of

Homeland Security Center for Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships in Washington, DC, shared his appreciation to all those who attended and briefed the participants on FEMA's future plans to increase the effectiveness of their disaster response which will in turn increase coordination with the states.

“

It has been an honor to host our Mountain West VOAD conference at the Church of Scientology and facilitate bringing together over a hundred disaster relief organizations and government partners.”

Ms. Joava Good, Churches of Scientology Disaster Response



Aaron Titus, President of Mountain West VOAD, opening the conference

This last winter was one of the snowiest on record in the states encompassing the Rocky Mountain/Northern Plains areas, closing roads with avalanches and blinding snow storms. The attention of disaster responders has now shifted from snow to the severe flooding the melting snows will bring as well as the threat of upcoming wild fires.

Few people know about what happens behind the scenes in the disaster community staffed with hundreds of government partners, volunteer organizations, and their

staffs. These amazing people plan all year long to help mitigate disasters as well as strategize for future earthquakes, floods, fires, paralyzing snowstorms, and more.

Over ten years ago the Mountain West VOAD was conceived by the chairs of seven State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. All of Mountain West states have challenges in common, which bring them together into a tight network across state borders. They all have large, sparsely populated geographical areas and few resources; this combination hampers their ability to respond effectively on their own. With this in mind, the mission of the Mountain West VOAD is to help voluntary organizations perform their individual missions, assist survivors, and help one another more easily across state boundaries. Mountain West has been so successful that the organization has now grown to include 13 states.

Ms. Joava Good, Deputy Director of the [Churches of Scientology Disaster Response](#) (CSDR) said, "It has been an honor to host our Mountain West VOAD conference at the Church of Scientology and facilitate bringing together over a hundred disaster relief organizations and government partners. We opened up our parking lot and side street to display emergency vehicles from the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Southern Baptists, and Team Rubicon. Large yellow tents in the parking lot housed meals provided by Operation BBQ Relief, the Salvation Army and Southern Baptists."

Meeting in person this week for the first time since COVID, and hearing the presentations throughout the three-day conference was inspiring and educational and reassured those attending that they will not be alone when the next disaster strikes. The conference offered extended time for the attendees to strengthen old relationships and form new ones.



Conference attendees touring the American Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicle



Joava Good, CSDR and Lisa Bagley, Chair Utah State VOAD presenting on the issue of collaboration between VOAD partners and emergency managers

Mountain West VOAD takes pride in being strong and coordinated through training sessions, the dedication of its members and the 4Cs of the National VOAD: Communication, Collaboration, Cooperation, and Coordination.

Disasters know no boundaries. Snowstorms, floods and fires sweep across wide-open spaces, causing destruction of private and public property. The key message shared by the conference speakers during the plenary and breakout sessions focused on increasing the 4Cs so as not to be bound by state lines. With warm spring temperatures coming, attention has shifted to the threat of massive flooding.

One attendee noted that the conference came at a very opportune time. Just in the last six months, the greater Mountain West area has had over 15 FEMA-declared disasters: wildfires in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Oregon; severe winter storms in South Dakota, Oklahoma and Washington State; and massive flooding and mudslides in Washington State.

Following the plenary and breakout sessions, conference attendees were treated to a tour of the Latter-day Saint's Humanitarian Center, where the attendees participated in a service project putting disaster hygiene kits together in preparation for future storms.

Closing out the conference, the chairs of the Mountain States VOAD and the Utah State VOAD presented a certificate of appreciation in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Volunteer Ministers to CSDR and the Scientology Volunteer Ministers.

Accepting this award, Ms. Good said, "While we are honored to receive this award we must also acknowledge all our VOAD and government partners for their incredible dedication. They are the life blood of our movement – our family."



Conference attendees taking advantage of long breaks to network to get know each other better



Mountain West VOAD & UT State VOAD chairs present award to Joava Good, CSDR, in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of L. Ron Hubbard's Volunteer Ministers

In closing Ms. Good said, "Our 'family' is huge and growing and we look forward to next year's conference. We greatly appreciate all who came this year. The list is long and shows the diversity of our Mountain West VOAD: A Child's Hope Foundation, Adventists Community Services, Alaska Disaster Relief, Alaska VOAD, American Red Cross, American/Utah Radio Relay League, Be Ready Utah, Bluffdale City Fire Dept, Box Elder County Emergency Manager, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, Capacity Path, CERT Eastern Idaho, chair Puerto Rico VOAD, Children's Disaster Services, Christian Aid Ministries of OK, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, City of Woodland Hills Emergency Manager, Colorado Division of Homeland Security, Crisis Clean Up and chair Mtn West VOAD, Churches of Scientology Disaster Response, FEMA Federal Headquarters, FEMA Region VIII, Grand County Sheriff's Office, Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Food Bank, Idaho VOAD, Idaho Office of Emergency Management, LDS Charities, Mennonite Disaster Response, Lutheran Social Services of Alaska, Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ, Montana VOAD, Mosaic Interfaith Ministries, Nevada Division of Emergency Management, Nevada VOAD chair, New Mexico Emergency Manager for Resilience Emergency Management, Operation BBQ Relief, Oregon VOAD, Salt Lake City Fire Emergency Manager, SLC Critical Infrastructure Liaison, Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, Sister Corp, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, Spanish Fork Emergency Manager, Team Rubicon, The Salvation Army, Tooele County Emergency Manager Community Outreach Coordinator, Tuff Services Ministries, Utah Emergency Manager, United Policyholders, United Way/211, US Air Force, Utah Idaho Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, Utah Food Bank, UServe Utah, UT Air National Guard Domestic Operations Chief, UT Council on Aging, UT Division of Emergency Management, UT State Department of Agriculture, Utah VOAD, Utah State Voluntary Liaison, Washington State VOAD, Woodland Hills Emergency Management, Wyoming 211, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security."

About the Churches of Scientology Disaster Response:

Churches of Scientology Disaster Response (CSDR) staff and volunteers have brought relief to those devastated by earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, bombings, shootings and other disasters since 2003.

CSDR is a US-based nonprofit disaster response organization incorporated in Washington, DC, with over 25 offices around the country helping to coordinate their local and regional responses.

CSDR has been a member of the National VOAD (www.nvoad.org) since 2006 and works closely with other disaster organizations to bring the needed relief and care to those who are affected.

In addition to addressing the physical needs following a disaster such as clean up, blue tarping, sheltering, serving food, and many other unmet needs, CSDR specializes knowing that trauma, loss, upset, stress and confusion affect survivors and in spiritual care, responders as well as caregivers in their ability to recover from and deal with the aftermath of disasters.

Rev. Susan Taylor
Churches of Scientology Disaster Response
+1 202-667-6404
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/628836724>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.