



NEWS RELEASE

Pueblo Chemical Depot



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PCD steps up to support Waldo Canyon Fire disaster

PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT, Colo.—The U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot Fire Department through its mutual aid agreements began supporting a raging forest fire west of Colorado Springs, which affected nine PCD workers and six workers from the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) residing in the fire area on Tuesday, June 26.

Constant record breaking high temperatures with very little rain started the tinderbox; coupled with the spreading fire and microburst downdrafts from a thunderstorm, a perfect firestorm blew out of control at Waldo Canyon, west of Colorado Springs, where two died and 346 residential homes burned to the ground.

PCD, through the Operations Center, immediately began tracking resources along with PCD personnel who lived in Colorado Springs and resided near the fire, communicating a possible need to support those without a place to stay and provide them with essentials. The Commander authorized workers with emergency response duties to support the disaster if requested.

Nine PCD firefighters supported the fire; Thor Bennedsen, David Bustamante, Sam Eslick, Stacey Harrod, David Hossler, Chief Wes Huntley, William Kent, Cory Matthews and Porfirio Salazar.

“The support of our depot workers helping those affected by the Waldo Canyon Fire was exemplary and focused their professional skills as I knew they would,” said LTC Tim Greenhaw, PCD Commander.

The Colorado Springs Fire Joint Information Center (JIC) requested support from the PCD Public Affairs Office and Chuck Sprague, Ken Roque and PCD Emergency Response JIC Call Taker Ms. Merilee Rasmussen all answered frantic phone calls requesting information from displaced residents working different shifts on five separate days at the El Paso County Fire Joint Information Center.

All who supported this effort had similar feelings about their experiences.

“I feel privileged for the opportunity I had to help out, and grateful for my training at our PCD JIC,” said Rasmussen. “I know I was providing important information and it renewed my faith in people serving people. Even though they were going through stressful moments, almost all of them thanked me for working the Joint Fire Information Center,” she added.

Dan Hernandez, PCD Plans Officer, transported cattle and horses in the fire zones to safe locations. Catherine Satow, Chief of the Access Control and Security Branch, and SFC John Coughlin, Depot NCOIC, housed evacuees until they could return to their homes. Satow also worked as a volunteer at a shelter. Police Officer Robbie Dunn, a reserve Teller County Sheriff’s Deputy, took annual leave and responded as a Teller County Deputy. PCD employees donated cash to purchase needed supplies for evacuees.

All depot displaced residents returned to their homes on July 3.

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Cut lines

JPG 3903

A Pueblo Chemical Depot Fire Tender idles ready to protect the Peregrine residential neighborhood during the Waldo Canyon Fire. *Photo by PCD Fire Department*

JPG 8316

PCD Firefighter Stacey Harrod carries a hand water pump to extinguish ground fire on the southwest corner of the Air Force Academy supporting efforts to control the Waldo Canyon Fire. *Photo by the PCD Fire Department*

JPG 0873

Pueblo Chemical Depot Fire Chief Wes Huntley (far right) musters with other firefighters working the Waldo Canyon Fire.

JPG JIC1a

Information specialists answer telephone calls from the public at the Waldo Canyon Fire Joint Information Center in Colorado Springs. Laurie Kilpatrick, PIO for the Pueblo County Sheriff (left, in white shirt) and Chuck Sprague, PCD Public Affairs (right, in gold shirt) answer evacuation questions during a six hour shift. *Photo by Robert Norville*

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) with headquarters at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., stores the nation's aging chemical weapons and develops programs aimed at effectively treating and ultimately eliminating chemical warfare materiel. For more information about CMA and its programs, visit www.cma.army.mil.