

An open letter to our Mosquito Fire District community,

We just want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to this community for their amazing response during this very stressful period. On behalf of the Mosquito Fire Board, and everyone who lends a hand at the fire station to keep us safe, a profound THANK YOU to all of our District residents. Your cooperation and call to action mattered when it was needed most and was sincerely appreciated.

No one wants to hear the words, "Evacuation Warning," but the vulnerability of our community became increasingly obvious and the need for everyone to be ready to leave was heard loud and clear. We learned that our District would not be getting the usual support from the Sheriff and CalFire anytime soon, as they were focused on the town of Foresthill and resources were already stretched thin. Volcanoville had already lost many structures and the southern leg of the fire was moving toward us.

Our Support Group members were tasked with getting the Evacuation Warning message out to the community and to encourage those with animals, RVs, at-risk family members, and those with personal safety concerns, to depart the hill before the warning became a mandatory order. As the day progressed, that message became more dire with the news of limited fire resources. Even with that threat, our Support Group knew this was a huge "ask" and fully understood the personal impact it would have on residents.

The message from our Support Group was to prepare now or to leave early, but "how" and "where" were the questions they heard most. Physically it was difficult for many of our elderly or impaired residents, and the cost of staying in a motel was always an expensive consideration. What about animals, large and small? How do we move them and where do we move them to? What about our RVs, cars, motorcycles and boats? Under this Evacuation Warning, the County did not have solutions immediately in place. Fairgrounds were not yet open for large animals and the evacuation site in Cool was full.

There was urgency in your questions and solutions were slow to materialize. We heard it in your voices as we answered phones and fielded questions as best we could, but more important, the good people of our community reached out to help. Through it all we saw neighbors and strangers stepping up without hesitation when called upon. Your selfless response during this frightful time was heartening, and reminded us how privileged we all are to live here.

With all that said, we are compelled to say yet again...

Thank you for heeding the recommendation, persevering through fear and uncertainty, and for understanding that our focus was - and always will be - to keep you safe. It is with that purpose our community was asked to endure disruption and hardship with emotional, physical and financial ramifications. The "ask" was indeed great. Please know that your actions mattered far more than our sincere appreciation could ever express.