

## "The Beast" Wildfire Evacuation from the Venue Perspective

- 1. Understanding the fire, magnitude and those impacted;
- 2. Why Northlands played a role in receiving those evacuated;
- 3. Lessons learned from a venue perspective; and
- 4. Takeaway thoughts, action items and questions.

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Overview















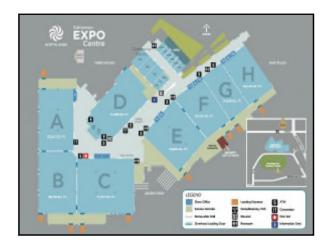
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# The Critical Role Played by Northlands



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## Chain of Command

- Venue does not lead emergency response venue supports it.
- Identify your decision-makers (rank), substitutes and authority. <u>Then</u> <u>communicate it.</u>
- Clearly articulate your communication cycle and stick to it.

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#### **Basic Needs**

#### The first 24 hours:

- ESRT brought immediate critical needs (clothing, cots, etc.)
- Alberta Health Services medication (including addiction)
- Humane Society pets
- Victim Services volunteers
- Phone charging stations and plug-ins



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#### Security

- Areas of the venue were designated secure zones – only accredited guests and limited staff could enter
- Remainder of venue provided support to resident and non-resident evacuees

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## Manage Your Resources

- Only bring to site what you need.
- Establish healthy boundaries around the desire to help.
- Plan for volunteers and "do-gooders".
- Hardest but sometimes most important words are "no thank you".

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## Media & Other Snoops

- Media was permitted on-site but not in the venue.
- Prepare for the appearance of religious organizations.
- Politicians and celebrities.



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## Changing Residents

- Most guests stayed only a short while.
- Those who stayed longer had exacerbating factors.



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## Reality Sets In

- · Shock wears off
- Depression, grief, hopelessness
- Showers and laundry
- Domestic violence
- Illness and hygiene
- Sex!



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#### Provincial Cash Cards & Insurance

- Distributed at the U of A
- More people able to access alternative accommodations
- Increased drug/alcohol problems amongst guests
- Increased casino attendance



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## Routines are Established

- · Religious worship
- · Increased socialization
- Entertainment/distraction particularly for children
- Message/information boards
- School enrollment



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#### Comfort & Distraction

- Computer room
- Gaming room
- Kids' play area
- Mothers' Day celebration
- Community activation
- Movies in Rexall
- Urban farm and racing barn tours



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## Impact on Staff

- Plan for and manage compassion fatigue.
- When your people are taking care of others, take care of your people.
- Let them cry and help them laugh
- During and after, recognize and celebrate
- BE SAFE.



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## **Closing Thoughts**

- Nothing goes according to plan, but stick to the plan.
- Someone has to pay for all this.
- Canadians are phenomenal, resilient creatures.

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