

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Individuals evacuated to supportive care shelter in West Fargo return home

FARGO, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services reported that 89 vulnerable individuals temporarily sheltered at Cheney Middle School in West Fargo have returned home to their residences in previously threatened areas of Fargo.

“A number of vulnerable individuals had been accompanied to the shelter on Sunday. Before returning home yesterday, many voiced their appreciation by applauding staff from the organizations that provided around-the-clock assistance,” said Dr. Andrew McLean, medical director of the department and its Southeast Human Service Center in Fargo.

McLean said individuals were accompanied back to their residences in the community with ongoing assistance from many local agencies.

Southeast Human Service Center director Candace Fuglesten said that as floodwaters rose and threatened the city late last week, case managers from the center and other community organizations contacted vulnerable individuals. They went to homes to talk to people about the flood threat and to offer assistance.

The supportive care shelter was established by the department and managed by American Red Cross volunteers to provide shelter for people with special needs who live independently in the community and who evacuated as a precaution. Human service center staff and other community service providers worked at the shelter providing needed support and services.

“So many individuals and organizations worked together to meet the needs of these Fargo residents during their temporary displacement. I am very thankful for the doctors, nurses, case managers and case aids from Southeast who contacted people, helped transport them, and staffed the facility through today,” Fuglesten said.

“We had tremendous support from others; it was a team effort,” she said. “Fargo Public Transit gave vulnerable people rides from the Reception Center to the shelter. Direct care workers from the Dakota Foundation assisted people. Social workers from Cass County Social Services and qualified service providers from Tammy’s Angels helped shelter residents with personal care and other needs. National Guard soldiers provided security, and public health nurses accompanied and helped care for people relocated on Monday from a shelter in Casselton.

MORE

Fargo residents leave supportive care shelter – page 2

Fuglesten said West Fargo Public Schools graciously agreed to provide space in the well-equipped school and arranged for some meals and related donated supplies from local businesses. FEMA and the Red Cross provided cots, blankets, and other supplies.

“I know that I am going to forget someone, and I regret that,” she said.

Fuglesten said being in a shelter is never easy. Shelter residents, she said, were kept busy with bingo, cards, other games, and other activities.

“Many people were thankful to have a safe place to go to while they waited for the flood threat to subside. That was especially true during the blizzard. However, they were ready to go home yesterday,” she said.

As part of the state’s comprehensive response to spring flooding, the Department of Human Services worked with the American Red Cross to establish two shelters for those who evacuated. In addition to the West Fargo shelter, a shelter for the general public was set up in Mayville, and these were supplemented by shelters established by local emergency management. Additionally, the North Dakota Department of Health established medical shelters to serve people with acute medical needs at Central Cass School in Casselton, Jamestown College in Jamestown, and the University of Mary in Bismarck.

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