



## **Rowlett on the Move**

Monthly Newsletter for the Rowlett Community  
January, 2016

***On December 26, 2015 around 7:00pm CST, Rowlett, Texas was hit by an EF4 Tornado that caused widespread devastation in our community.***

***1,145 homes and businesses were impacted.***

***23 individuals were injured with no fatalities.***

***Approximately 8,000 homes and businesses lost power, over 6,000 of which were in Rowlett.***

### ***A message from Mayor Gottel, delivered at the January 5 City Council Meeting***

Going out into our community after the tornado was a very sobering experience, the damage done is significant and the road to recovery ahead of us will be long. This past week has been absolutely amazing. More people donating than I could ever have imagined, our local businesses continue to give with no end in sight, organizations from all over the country setting up shop to help the people of Rowlett. Churches all over the City opening their doors to help, regardless of the denomination or background, turning their churches into donation centers and shelters. Thousands of volunteers descending upon this community to assist those impacted. 47 agencies and municipalities from all over sending manpower and equipment to help out our amazing City staff. Oncor and Atmos teams working around the clock to ensure we had power and gas services restored as soon as possible. More food donated to feed all of those working and all of those displaced than you could possibly imagine. The emergency services agencies, such as Lakepointe Medical Center, offering free services in the form of a health clinic at the Rowlett Community Centre, and later at First Christian Church, giving tetanus and flu shots along with general checkups in case there is an injury. The outpouring of love and services is astounding, the generosity shown our community is indescribable.

We have made significant strides in our cleanup effort. 65,000 cubic yards of debris have been cleared from our streets and right-of-ways to allow residents and emergency services access back into the affected neighborhoods. Rowlett, has always been a very special city to me and the love, comfort and support that has been provided to help us get back on our feet has now far exceeded any possible expectation. I continue to pray for comfort and healing for all of those who have been impacted in the days ahead and I've heard from many about what a caring community this is, the amount of support, folks are so moved at the over-abundance of people flooding this community with assistance and offers to help. The devastation is wide. We have over 1,100 homes impacted in some way, and somewhere in the area of 500 of those will likely be a total loss. But without the incredible efforts of your City staff, along with the tireless work by countless volunteers and relief organizations, our community would not be nearly as far along in our recovery efforts. The churches who have flung open their doors, the neighbors helping neighbors...some of whom have lived on the same street for years and never even met have now established lifelong relationships.

In closing, I cannot thank all of the citizens, all of the businesses, all of the organizations, the City staff, and the resources that have poured into our City for all of their help and hard work. We've got a long road ahead of us, I'm not going to kid you. But we've made significant progress. I will tell you that we will be here, I will be here, for as long as it takes to provide assistance so that we can move forward as a City. We will get through this together as a community. I truly believe that we will be stronger and closer than ever before.

### **Lost and Found Pet Info**

The Rowlett Animal Shelter, located at 4402 Industrial, is open and accepting displaced and found pets. Citizens who have either lost an animal or found one are encouraged to call 972-412-6219 for information. As of 1/6/2016, the shelter is housing 59 animals that have not been retrieved.

### **Storm Debris Removal and Trash Pickup Information**

For information and instructions for roll off, dumpster and storage device placement, along with residential trash pick-up instructions, please read the update, which includes helpful "Do's and Dont's", on pages 3-4 of this newsletter.

### **City Does Not Perform Home Demolition**

In response to some questions asked by affected residents, the City of Rowlett will not perform demolition on any homes. This is the homeowner's responsibility and you will need to work with your insurance company to facilitate.

### **Assistance with Debris Cleanup**

PLEASE reach out to your displaced neighbors, friends and families: if YOU or anyone you know needs volunteer assistance with debris cleanup, the following organizations are mobilized and here in Rowlett to help:

Texas Baptist Men: 214-908-6239

Samaritan's Purse International Relief: 469-996-1429

Christian Aid Ministries: 817-933-2948

### **Portable Restrooms in Affected Area**

Portable restrooms have been placed in nine locations stationed throughout the affected area to service both residents and volunteers during the clean-up process.

See a map here: [Portable Restrooms Location Map](#)

### **Landfill Pass Information**

C.M. Hinton Landfill - 3175 Elm Grove Road - 972-205-3670 - Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm, Saturday 8am-3pm

Rowlett residents affected by the tornado may come to City Hall (4000 Main), the Rowlett Community Centre (5300 Main Street), First Christian Church (corner of Miller & Chiesa) or the Granger Recreation Center (1310 W. Avenue F in Garland) to receive two landfill passes, each of which will allow you dispose of debris without charge twice in a calendar year (four trips to the landfill).

The normal proof of a utility bill will be waived at this time, residents just need to present ID of some form. We realize that some residents lost many forms of identification and we will do our best to accommodate those without formal ID.

### **Contractor Registration and List**

In an effort to aid in contractor registration and permit issuance, City of Rowlett Development Services, located at 3901 Main Street, will open at 7 a.m. for as long as needed. An inspector is available to perform emergency gas and electric inspection as well. Please find a list of contractors registered to perform work in the City of Rowlett below. This list, of course, will change daily so updates will be made periodically.

At this time, the City of Rowlett will only be issuing solicitor and contractor permits to DFW-based companies. The Rowlett Police Department has been working closely with the Texas Department of Insurance, as well as the National Insurance Crime Bureau to help safeguard our citizens. [Registered Contractor List.](#)

### **Joint Disaster Management Resource Center Will Close Sunday, January 10**

Would you like to volunteer? Do you or someone you know need assistance?

The Cities of Rowlett and Garland have established a Joint Disaster Management Resource Center, located at the Granger Recreation Center, 1310 W. Avenue F in Garland, 972-205-2771. This joint center offers volunteers, residents impacted by the tornado, and the organizations offering resources a "one-stop-shop" to connect.

The center operates three components:

Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) - disaster volunteers are registered and referred to local

Client Disaster Services Center - residents impacted by the event can get assistance/access to a multitude of resources and recovery agencies.

Donations Management - Voluntary organizations with established donations structures in place to receive and deliver appropriate donated goods to disaster victims.

**For additional tornado recovery information, visit [www.rowlett.com/TornadoInformation](http://www.rowlett.com/TornadoInformation).**

**City of Rowlett - 972-412-6100 - [www.rowlett.com](http://www.rowlett.com)**

### **Affected Resident Insurance Coverage Information Form**

The City of Rowlett is currently compiling information to assist in a possible FEMA disaster declaration. If you are a homeowner or tenant of an affected property, please take a quick moment to fill out the form linked below. This information will only be used by the City's Emergency Disaster Response Team and will not be shared with any outside organizations. We realize that this is an extremely difficult time for our community and appreciate your participation.

[Affected Resident Insurance Coverage Form](#)

### **Info for GISD Students and Families**

Help GISD find families impacted by the storms: Meals, transportation and school uniforms are just some of the many things storm victims may need as they return to work and school Jan. 4 and 5. Please help locate all GISD families impacted by the tornadoes so they can answer questions and offer assistance. Identify them by calling 972-487-4999 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday throughout Jan. 8, or visit [www.garlandisd.net/gisdrecovers/](http://www.garlandisd.net/gisdrecovers/). A list of temporary bus stops is also available there.

[Garland ISD Recovers](#)

### **Mail Service for Affected Areas**

US Postal Service will continue to deliver mail to the homes that have mailboxes. For the homes without mailboxes, those that have been destroyed and those deemed uninhabitable, residents will need to present ID and pick up their mail at the Rowlett Post Office.

### **Texas Department of Insurance Information**

For answers to insurance questions, help with a claim, or to report suspected insurance fraud, call the TDI Consumer Help Line at 1-800-252-3439. Help is available in English and Spanish. Insurance specialists are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer your insurance questions and to help you with company contact information.

Visit [TDI's StormLink page](#) for information to help you recover from a storm.

### **Be Aware of Post-Disaster Fraud Practices**

Under the Deceptive Trade Practices Act, Texas law specifically prohibits deceptive acts or practices following a disaster declared by the Governor. These acts may include the selling or leasing of fuel, food, medicine or other necessities at an excessive price or demanding an excessive price in connection with the sale of these items.

- Door-to-door sales are quite common in post-disaster areas. Under Texas law, the seller must advise you of your right to cancel the sale within three days, and you should always ask for a physical address and for references. Be wary of any contractor that asks for full payment in advance or provides you a contract with blank spaces in it.
- Residents who are covered by insurance should work closely with their insurance provider. When interviewing a contractor, ask questions, ask for identification and ensure any contractor you hire is a legitimate contractor in good standing with the Better Business Bureau.
- It's also critically important that you safeguard your personal information. As state and federal assessment teams survey the damage, please know they will always have identification and will never ask for or accept money. Additionally, other post-disaster fraud practices may include fraudulent building or housing inspectors and contractors, phony pleas for disaster donations or fake offers of local, state or federal aid.

**If you suspect fraud or have a complaint, call the Texas Attorney General Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-621-0508.**

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**Information on January Parks and Recreation and Rowlett Public Library programming is available at [www.rowlett.com](http://www.rowlett.com).**

**City of Rowlett - 972-412-6100 - [www.rowlett.com](http://www.rowlett.com)**

## *City of Rowlett Storm Debris Removal, Trash Pickup Update*

Rowlett has been working around the clock, with the help of many other cities, to remove and dispose of debris. We have completed the first pass of all affected streets and are well into a second pass, far exceeding any expectations for an event of this magnitude. This progress is directly attributable to the incredible amount of support offered in the form of mutual aid from countless communities throughout the Metroplex, who have provided their manpower and equipment.



Currently, the City of Rowlett is vetting the next steps of this recovery phase and we are being very cautious with the decisions made to ensure the best interests of the entire community are considered. This storm

may receive a major disaster declaration, which could make disaster-related costs including debris removal and monitoring eligible for FEMA reimbursement. All debris removal, regardless of a FEMA declaration, will be conducted in accordance with FEMA guidelines to allow for potential reimbursement. This will ensure that our efforts are eligible for such funding when and if it occurs.

Rowlett staff has applied for assistance and has met with FEMA officials, who have done a preliminary inspection of the region, and they are assisting Rowlett in accumulating the appropriate information to make the determination on the declaration. In the coming week FEMA officials will be returning with several subject matter experts and evaluators to get into the finer points of this determination. When this determination occurs we will make a public notification and provide additional information.

In the meantime, City staff and the mutual aid cities will continue to manage the debris removal efforts. **KEEP IN MIND** that no commercial debris or hazardous waste will be removed by the City. All debris placed in the right-of-way must be related to this disaster.

Homeowners should contact their insurance carrier about coverage for debris removal. Contractors hired for repair or demolition are required to remove and dispose of debris, rather than placing debris in the right-of-way. If debris is dumped in the right-of-way it will not be picked up by Waste Management or the City.

Homeowners and volunteers who place residential debris in the right-of-way should keep disaster debris separate from household garbage. Clean vegetative debris and recyclables should be placed separately from construction, demolition debris and mixed debris. Please place debris outside of travel lanes and drainage ditches and away from obstacles such as mail boxes, water meters and fire hydrants.

**Currently, we estimate that Storm debris removal will continue for about 10 weeks. The first and second rounds of debris removal has actually been completed. We will make additional passes but homeowners, contractors and volunteers need to adhere to these guidelines to ensure a more safe and rapid recovery. The City will continue to send out communications specifying when the final debris collections will take place.**

***Here are some specific guidelines to assist residents with the process:***

**DO's:**

- DO place debris just behind the curb, do not block travel lanes or drainage ditches, driveways or alleys;
- DO keep disaster-related debris separate from regular household garbage;
- DO separate trash and debris according to its type (i.e. regular household garbage, construction debris, vegetation debris, household hazardous waste, "white goods" such as refrigerators, ac units, stoves, etc., and electronics).
- DO use white and/or clear garbage bags in order to expedite the identification of debris.
- DO place a tarp on hazardous waste debris in order to reduce chances of hazardous waste runoff.
- DO recommend that volunteer workers also follow all of these guidelines.

**DO NOT's:**

- DO NOT deposit hazardous waste in the right-of-way, this includes paint, petroleum products, oils, electronic materials, etc.;
- DO NOT direct paid contractors to place debris in the public right-of-way;
- DO NOT place debris in driveways or alleys;
- DO NOT place debris that is covered by insurance on the public right-of-way;
- DO NOT commingle household garbage with disaster-related debris; and
- DO NOT place debris near obstacles such as gas meters, water meters, fire hydrants or mail boxes.

**WASTE COLLECTION:**

Waste Management has resumed household waste collection services in the affected area for those still in their homes. They will only pick up normal household waste. They will not pick up concrete, bricks, roofing materials, or other construction materials. This is the responsibility of the homeowner and/or their insurance company.

If your Waste Management bins (polycarts) were damaged or lost as a result of this event, please contact Waste Management directly at 1-800-772-8653 so that you may receive replacements. Please note that recycling will be temporarily suspended in the affected area so that you can use either bin for recycled material or household trash. For this reason, residents may see trash and recycle mixed collections, i.e. trash may be seen thrown in a recycle truck and recycle in a trash truck, in an effort to reduce traffic within those areas. Waste Management will pick up the household waste where they can access it. In the event your household waste is not accessible, please contact Waste Management at 1-800-772-8653 and they will make arrangements to get this material disposed of properly. **DO NOT THROW HOUSEHOLD WASTE INTO ROLL OFFS OR DUMPSTERS OR MIX IT WITH OTHER DEBRIS.**

**ROLL OFFS, DUMPSTER, PODS, STORAGE DEVICES**

Please be advised that if you contract for ROLL OFFS, DUMPSTERS, PODS, OTHER STORAGE DEVICES or any stationary device of this nature, they must be placed on the sidewalk, in the driveway, or in the yard but not blocking fire hydrants, water or gas meters, or alleys. **THEY MUST NOT BE PLACED IN THE STREET.** If they are found blocking public access, public safety, public services, fire hydrants, alleys, water or gas meters, Rowlett staff will make an attempt to notify the owners to move them. If no response is received they will be removed at

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