A Canadian Moment

- On May 3, over 80,000 people were evacuated from the Fort McMurray Region.
- The fire escalated quickly, triggering the largest evacuation in Alberta’s history.
- The fire was finally brought under control on Monday (June 13).
- On June 1 re-entry to Fort McMurray commenced, 29 days after the mandatory evacuation order.
- The following presentation outlines the high-level components of the Red Cross response to date.
SCALE OF EVENT

- Fire escalated quickly, triggering the largest evacuation since Alberta Floods. Unlike the floods, this was extremely high-stakes, high-stress with many lives at risk.
- At its peak, the fire moved at 30 to 40 metres per minute and created its own weather patterns. A black funnel cloud emanating from the heart of the flames became so monstrous it was visible from space.
- Traffic congestion forced many to a stand-still. As cars ran out of fuel hundreds of families spent the night on the side of the road. Populations that had fled north had to be rescued and airlifted to safety.
- The fire was finally bought under control on Monday (June 13)
- On June 1 re-entry to Fort McMurray commenced, 29 days after the mandatory evacuation order.

SITUATION

- One of the most if not the most multi ethnic city of Canada
- Major boom for the oil industry created shortage of housing and inflation in prices until 2014. Anecdotal example: eligibility for subsidized housing is
for people earning less than $85,000/year.

• High levels of unemployment since the oil price drop in 2014, as well as debt since people who were laid off can’t pay their mortgage
• Transient population ("shadow population") estimates as high as 43,000
• High level of drug and alcohol abuse
When people were evacuated, they left their homes not knowing if they would have a home to go back to.

Immediately following the evacuation, the Red Cross began responding to meet the needs of individuals, families and entire communities who had been impacted by massive wildfires in Alberta.

The Red Cross began supporting efforts at local shelters in Edmonton, Calgary and Lac La Biche.

Families and individuals who were evacuated were encouraged to register with the Canadian Red Cross online or by phone.

Once people were registered, the Red Cross was able to help meet immediate needs by providing shelter, comfort and care, financial assistance and essentials such as food, water and basic supplies.
Unparalleled domestic appeal success: matching from both provincial and federal partners

Complexity introduced through pressure to spend and public expectations

Heightened public and client expectations, security issues, media awareness, and use of social media to vent frustration (“what is CRC doing with $100m? I’m not getting enough of the pie’, and threats (eg. “provide me with assistance now or I go to CBC”)

Potential implications for expectations of large EFT and generous assistance in future responses
Massive needs & challenging context result in need to change how we work.

**NEED TO INNOVATE**

**Creation of Digital Components to Operations**

- Registration Portal
- Electronic Transfer of Funds
- Communicating with Beneficiaries Tele-Casework
Note: Information below is too detailed but thought it may be helpful for deeper context if questions arise.

- Frontline Personnel, Clients, Data Centre
- Red Cross Client Management Database
- Operations Leadership, Communications, GoA, Frontline Staff, Call Centre Agents, Travel Agency, etc.

Information is feeding in to the Client Management database from a number of sources: Clients (registering online), Frontline personnel (validating clients during re-entry, or call centre agents updating contact information). This necessitated the creation of 15 person data centre in Burnaby to facilitate the oversight, management and clean-up of the Client Management Database. The data centre also does clean-up, change requests and ID verification by e-mail.

Information is being drawn from the CMD by a huge number of internal and external stakeholders, from operations leadership and Gov. of Alberta looking for demographic information to feed planning, to frontline staff using the information to validate client ID and confirm registration information.
FIRST CRUCIAL STEPS: REGISTRATION

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

Online Registration Now Available for Alberta Fire Evacuees

Red Deer, Alta., May 9, 2014 – The Canadian Red Cross has opened an online registration system for fire evacuees to register their names due to the intense wildfire in Alberta.

Families and individuals who have been evacuated can register with the Canadian Red Cross by the following ways:

• Online at redcross.ca/registration

• By calling 1-888-338-3976

Web Portal Registrations

58,644 total
“Please, please go online to redcross.ca and register. Tell us where you are and who you are and fill that out because the more we know about you, the more quickly we can plan our support for you.”

– Premier Notley

- Two Red Cross call centres active within five hours of evacuation notice (May 3) and eventually staffed up to 13 centres with over 150 call centre agents to help register large or complex families, make changes to registrations, and provide assistance

- Online registration portal opened May 5, along with on-site distribution of cash cards in Calgary and Edmonton
Challenges:
As many of the evacuees were working in the oil and gas sector in Fort McMurray, they evacuated back home where their family/friends were located. On the surface this looks like enough of a challenge in of itself, but we’ve come to recognize that this also represents secondary challenges as well:

1) Many of these workers formed part of a so-called ‘shadow population’; people working in town who were not registered with the Government of Alberta or the regional municipality. In the 2015 census, this population was 48,000, while the permanent population was 82,000. As such it’s very difficult to calculate size of the potential client base and budget for various types of service delivery.

2) Without government-issued photo ID, how can we reliably confirm that these individuals are genuine evacuees?

One of the most if not the most multi ethnic city of Canada
Major boom for the oil industry created shortage of housing and inflation in prices until 2014. Anecdotal example: eligibility for subsidized housing is for people earning less than $85,000/year.

High levels of unemployment since the oil price drop in 2014, as well as debt since people who were laid off can’t pay their mortgage

Transient population (”shadow population”) estimates as high as 43,000 (88,000 “official, if I’m not mistaken)

High level of drug and alcohol abuse

Last count I have was that over 40,000 people (just under half the official count) had returned, but hard to pinpoint as lots of people go back and forth

We have managed to make headway on both of these issues through some good brain power, but it gives you a sense of the complexity associated with this population.
Modalities by the Numbers:
EFT: 89.9m
Cash Cards: 7.0m
Vouchers: 4.0m
In-Kind (items): 3.0m
Canada Post: 1.9m
Cheques: $864,000
As individuals and families registered with the Red Cross, a number of channels were used to communicate to beneficiaries looking for assistance:

- **Call centres** - fielding inquiries around the clock. Call centre in Burnaby was activated the night of May 3 at about 10 p.m. (immediately after launching appeal) and took calls until 3 a.m. on May 4. At the peak of the response, we had 13 call centres open across the country, representing over 150 call centre agents.

- **Digital Communications** including web and social media - Social media quickly became an important point of contact for evacuees, including troubleshooting issues related to receiving funds and accessing other services.

- **Email, phone and text blasts** - used to reach beneficiaries to advise of assistance being offered.

- **Face-to-Face** – Red Cross offices, shelter sites, and information centres.
• Call centres
• Digital Communications including web and social media
• Email, phone and text blasts used to reach beneficiaries
• Social media quickly became part of our daily operations not just a PR tool – became an important point of contact for evacuees, including troubleshooting issues related to receiving funds and accessing other services. This required near round-the-clock staffing, including surge support from volunteers and staff (including American Red Cross).

Facebook:
• Facebook: 3.2 Million people reached
• More than 13,750 new page likes; Canadian Red Cross Facebook page now tops 100,000 fans
• Top Facebook post reached over 865,000 people (including 110,000 paid reach)
• Average of over 5,500 daily engaged users of the Canadian Red Cross Facebook page (clicks, likes, comments, video and photo views, etc.)

Twitter:
• 17.5 million impressions / over 1 million paid impressions
• over 128,600 mentions @redcrosscanada
• 2758% increase in activity for @redcrosscanada compared to previous month

3 Periscope sessions:
• 1,200 participants
FACTS AT A GLANCE
AS OF THE END OF JUNE

• $136 Million Dollars Raised with over 1 Million Donors
• 2,490 Red Cross Personnel Engaged in the Response
• 208,000 Personnel Hours
• 52,252 Initial Electronic Fund Transfers Deposited
• 26,062 Electronic Fund Transfers Deposited
• 67,784 Calls to Red Cross Call Centres
• 35,395 Cash Cards and Vouchers Distributed
• 28,930 Clean-Up Kits Distributed
• 7,000 Air Tickets for Transportation Home
• 1,518 Needs Assessments Completed in Fort McMurray

***Please note – the above numbers should be cross-checked and updated based on the most recent dashboard and sit rep distributed by NDCT Information Management before presenting.***
As of the end of June, more than 34,400 clients have checked-in with the Red Cross upon re-entry to Fort McMurray.

The Red Cross has worked in close collaboration with the Government of Alberta, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and community groups to support families and individuals as they have re-entered their communities over the past month.

Transportation has been provided in the form of buses and flights to get individuals and families home. (More recently, transportation is being offered in the form of flights only, as it’s more efficient and cost-effective in terms of getting people home quicker)

A second wave of financial assistance is also being offered to households as they return home. This is the $300 per household and $50 for each subsequent person in the household.

Household supplies such as after fire kits and clean-up kits have also been distributed to those in need upon arrival in Fort McMurray.

The Red Cross continues to provide transportation and re-entry assistance as residents continue to return home.

Moving forward, the Red Cross will work closely with beneficiaries and conduct case work to ensure their needs are met as they rebuild and
recover.

***Please note, the first stat included above should be cross-checked and updated based on the most recent dashboard and sit rep distributed by NDCT Information Management before presenting.***
Voluntary sector partnerships were robust in this response, particularly in Fort McMurray where Salvation Army volunteers have supported us in basic distribution of CRC resources like clean-up kits, hygiene kits, after the fire kits, teddy bears and grocery hampers, thus freeing up CRC personnel to conduct case management.
Eligible small business owners, sole proprietors, and trades people in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo could receive modest financial support of up to $20,000 in a phased approach. This could assist with things such as uninsured losses; deductibles; minor repairs; clean-up; equipment; and occupational training expenses.

Phase 1: Emergency Financial Support of $1,000 was provided to eligible business owners who registered through the Wood Buffalo Business Recovery Hotline.

Phase 2: Coming soon (Financial assistance up to $8,000 to eligible businesses)

Phase 3: Financial assistance up to $11,000
Recognition of unique needs of Indigenous communities, and need for specialized support.

- Direct support to needs assessments, case management and provision of direct assistance through the Outreach Team in support of all First Nations (Treaty 8) evacuated as well as Metis including referrals
- Support to the Mikisew group – Treaty 8 Round Dance and celebration (support to cultural events)
- Support to the Welcome and Information Centre in re-entry (on going)
- Participation in coordination with Government and Leadership structures including AEMA
MANITOBA CALL CENTRE

27 Days of Operation
EOC Converted to Call Centre
Donation Centre Opened in Boardroom
11,327 Outbound Calls to Evacuees
6,163 Inbound Calls from Evacuees
17,490 Total Calls Managed in MB
38% of Canadian Call Volume
179 Volunteers Deployed to Call Centre
2,124.5 Volunteers Hours in Call Centre
MANITOBA DIRECT AID
- 254 Evacuees in Manitoba
- Manitoba Outreach Teams
- Direct Aid and Needs Assessments
- Directive 7 Support
- 102 Families • 219 Beneficiaries
- $87,947.00 in Direct Aid
- Directive 8 Support
- 9 Families • 13 Beneficiaries
- $37,288.22 in Direct Aid

SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO REMAIN AWAY FROM HOME
MANITOBA DEPLOYMENT

6 Staff
14 Volunteers
IMPACTS TO MANITOBA RESPONSE

Shamattawa FN Water Shortage
  • May 5 to May 21
  • 6 Response Personnel • 218.0 Personnel Hours

Alberta Wildfire Response
  • May 3 and Ongoing
  • 188 Response Personnel • 3,893.0 Personnel Hours

Chemawawin Cree Nation Wildfire Evacuation
  • June 23 to June 30
  • 142 Response Personnel • 4,813.0 Personnel Hours

Long Plain FN EF1 Tornado and Evacuation
  • July 20 and Ongoing

Waywayseecappo FN EF2 Tornado and Evacuation
  • August 8 and Ongoing
QUESTIONS?
RED CROSS OPEN HOUSE
FORT MCMURRAY WIDFIRE

Learn how the Canadian Red Cross helps people in need and responded to the largest disaster in national history.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2016
7 to 9 p.m.
Red Cross Office, 1111 Portage Ave., Winnipeg