

GUEST COLUMN to the MONROE DISPATCH

For the Thursday, August 18, 2016 Edition

From: Mayor James E. "Jamie" Mayo

Prayers for South Louisiana and Those Rendering Aid

By now, we all have seen, heard, or read about the widespread destruction caused by the rain storm that dumped more than 20-inches of water in many Baton Rouge area south Louisiana parishes. Our hearts and prayers go out to all affected by this devastating storm.

Here, we know all too well what our neighbors to the south are going through. Many are still battling the effects of the historic storm that devastated north Louisiana this past March. I know that many of you are praying for friends, family, and fellow Louisianans; and, that is much needed. But, the bible tells us in the book of James that "faith without works is dead being alone." That's why I want to encourage you to do what you can to support our neighbors to the south. Send food, water, clothing or whatever you can to help.

The Monroe Fire Department hosts the Region 8 Urban Search and Rescue Team. This highly skilled team has a primary service area of Region 8 (Ouachita, Union, Lincoln, Jackson, Caldwell, Richland, Morehouse, Franklin, West Carroll, East Carroll, Madison and Tensas Parish). I am proud to say on the evening of Friday, August 12th, a few members of this highly skilled team were dispatched to go down south and aid in swift water rescue efforts from vehicles, cars, homes.

On Sunday, August 14th, Monroe Fire Chief Terry Williams and other Fire Chiefs who host the (nine total) Urban Search and Rescue teams across the state participated in a conference call with State Fire Marshall. We and others agreed to send personnel for 14-day deployment to aid with door-to-door searches, enter homes for search and rescue efforts, and to help mark the structures that have been searched and cleared (similar to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina).

You may have caught a glimpse of some of our guys during news coverage on CNN. Our latest Region 8 team that was deployed to the Baton Rouge area includes a total of eight personnel from the Monroe Fire (5), Ouachita Parish Fire (2) and Ruston Fire (1) departments.

"The devastation is phenomenal in magnitude. Let's continue to pray for those affected, and those offering assistance," said Monroe Fire Chief Terry Williams.

By working together, we are making a difference. Monroe is one city, with one future!