

CalDART organizes Oregon Firefighting Airlift

By Paul Marshall, CalDART President

On Monday September 14th, California's and Oregon's forests burned in some of the biggest fires on record. Direct Relief's Vice President of Emergency Response Andrew McCalla and colleague Chris Alleway were driving from their base in Santa Barbara to Big Sur and Santa Cruz with a big problem. After they distributed this batch of supplies to medical clinics in need on the central coast, how would they get a load of 100,000 KN95 face masks, 5 wildland fire kits, and a variety of other vital supplies to Eugene Oregon by Saturday to assist with the fire response there? They had been contacted by a new partner, Reach Out Worldwide with an urgent need for supplies. They would spend the week assembling the supplies, and needed quick delivery Saturday when ready. On top of that, Direct Relief needed to be onsite in Eugene for delivery. They called CalDART to see if we could help, and we did.

By Saturday we had 23 instrument pilots lined up, including 8 Angel Flight pilots obtained by Angel Flight President Josh Olson and his team. Jim Gates of Torrance DART not only assisted ramp operations at Santa Barbara, but also found Doug Mockett who flew the jet that day. The local CalDART members in Santa Barbara pitched in — Karen Kahn (also a CalPilots Board member and member of the Santa Barbara Airport Commission) flew her Baron in the flight and set up arrangements with the Signature FBO at Santa Barbara. Levi Maaia flew his Cessna 182, arranged for the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Aero Squadron to man the gates and provide ramp support, and interfaced Direct Relief's media team. Mary Bromage led volunteers from her flying club, helping load pilots and fill out the Aircraft Load Sheets. Ron Lovick of San Diego CalDART flew up to Santa Barbara to assist with ramp operations. Jeff Moorhouse, Angel Flight West Disaster Response Wing Leader, also provided ramp support at Santa Barbara. North Bay DART Member Andy Werback arranged transfer services hosted by the Sonoma Jet Center and Josh Hochberg at Santa Rosa. Neal White of the Oregon Pilot Association's nascent DART group organized ramp arrangements with Atlantic Aviation at Eugene.

Overall, we loaded 17 planes on the ramp at Santa Barbara with 4776 pounds of cargo and 3 passengers. 11 of the pilots flew direct from Santa Barbara to Eugene. 12 pilots flew the remaining 6 loads in two legs, transferring cargo at Reid Hillview, Palo Alto, Byron, and Santa Rosa. Local print and television media covered the operation in Santa Barbara and Eugene, and various CBS, NBC and Fox affiliates picked up the story nationwide.

Learn more and/or join or donate to CalDART at caldart.org.



Direct Relief's box truck showed up at 9:00AM with 6 pallets of materials to be flown to Oregon.



Greg Blanck of San Carlos Airport had the heaviest load of all the planes in the piston and turboprop class, narrowly edging out Douglas Sisk's Kodiak 100.



Pilots arrived throughout the morning to load their planes on the Signature ramp. Pilots came from throughout California, and a couple flew down from Oregon.



Doug Mockett (light blue mask) flew cargo and 3 people in his CJ III. Andrew McCalla, VP of Disaster Response at Direct Relief (far right), was on site in Santa Barbara and Eugene and returned in time for a 6:00pm dinner with his family.



Ken Meyers of Grass Valley loads his Meridian with the help of DART staff filling out his aircraft load sheet while a line-man fills his tanks. It was a busy ramp!



Paul Rekieta (left) of Reid Hillview poses with Roy Hildestad of Santa Barbara just after they transferred Karen Kahn's load to Paul at Reid Hillview.



Carol Munch's (orange vest) Palo Alto DART earned their initial operating experience, organizing 5 aircraft and 3 loads with transfers at Palo Alto. Bob Goodwyn (red vest) of Reid Hillview DART assisted on the ramp at Palo Alto.



Instrument conditions in Oregon improved throughout the day. Direct Relief produced an outstanding video on the day's events— watch it [here](#).



[Newspaper](#) and [television](#) media in Santa Barbara and [Eugene](#) proudly featured the story. Stories like this help people better understand the value of our local airports.

CaIDART Disaster Airlift Response Team **DART**

