

12C The Pensacola News-Journal Sunday, January 14, 1962

"YOU ARE WONDERFUL"

These three words explain the feeling that the citizens, businessmen and officials of Okaloosa County and Crestview feel for all the valuable and unselfish assistance which you rendered to our stricken community in the aftermath of the tornado which struck out of the late afternoon skies on Friday, Jan. 5.

It is so true that this time will live vividly in the minds of all the residents of the community for many, many years to come . . . but it is equally true that the wonderful response, and untiring efforts which were extended by so many wonderful friends from throughout Northwest Florida and South Alabama will be a warm memory that will stay with us through all these years.

The simple word "thanks" seems so small for the tremendous efforts and sacrifices which were made to come to our assistance and yet we want you to know that all of us are extremely grateful and unable to express these feelings adequately.

WE are aware that there were countless hundreds of individuals that offered their services to the officials of the county and city during this disaster and feel that each offer should be personally acknowledged and the individuals personally and publically recognized for their efforts.

THE PEOPLE OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY opened their hearts . . . and we want to recognize the tremendous support which came from this particular area . . . the Escambia County Search and Rescue Team was an invaluable addition to the staff of workers and their efforts not only assisted the over-taxed agencies of Okaloosa County, but their efforts saved hundreds of dollars in losses for the people of this community . . . The Escambia County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Bill Davis, The Pensacola Police Department and the Naval units from both Pensacola and Milton played a big part in maintaining order out of the chaos which existed.

We must also extend special thanks to all the officials at Eglin Field for the immediate reaction of sending medical teams, heavy disaster equipment and their personnel into our community to give immediate assistance, also to Doctors and Nurses from all the surrounding area.

There are others that deserve special thanks and recognition: Sheriff Wade Cobb and his department of Santa Rosa County, Sheriff Andy Anderson and the Walton County officers, Sheriff Cletus Andrews and Holmes County, Sheriff Abbott and Bay County, Sheriff George Watts and Washington County and Sheriff Cliff Meredith and Covington County officers.

Included in the list that need special thanks were officials and police and fire departments from Pensacola, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Valparaiso, Milton, DeFuniak Springs, Bonifay, Florida, Opp, and Andalusia . . . and as far away as Tallahassee where the City Manager and Civil Defense Director came in to spend hours assisting in the aftermath of the disaster. The Florida Forest Service and the Game and Fish Commission threw more than 50 men in to help.

There were others, of course, including Mrs. Oatman, matron from the Escambia County Sheriff's Department, the civil defense unit from Port St. Joe who traveled more than 140 miles to offer their help. The local civil defense unit and units from other areas offered valuable assistance.

But, even more important . . . there are those we may not have seen or had a record of . . . and we wish to publicly thank every individual . . . and every civic organization that had a part in this assistance. . . .

The utility companies deserve special commendation for their efforts in speedily restoring service for emergency needs and for all those affected by the tornado.

Mayor George Whitehurst and city officials did a tremendous job of co-ordinating efforts with this office . . . and not near enough can be said for Col. H. N. Kirkman, Lt. Joe Livingston and all the members of the Florida Highway Patrol who were called on for countless hours of duty both during and after the tornado.

We offer our thanks to Governor Farris Bryant, State Road Board Member Billy Mayo, the National Guard and all the state, county, city, and federal agencies that pitched in on emergency notice to speed the recovery of this community from the worse disaster in its history.

Special recognition, too, should be given to the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Posse and the Crestview Ministerial Association and all the churches of the area that have played such a part in assisting the tornado victims.

The heartfelt thanks of all citizens, businessmen and officials go to each of you mentioned and to all others that offered their help. . . .

We are aware of what you did for us . . . and we trust that you will know of our undying gratitude for those efforts.

RAY WILSON

SHERIFF OF OKALOOSA COUNTY

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