



A History Of Coming To The Rescue

lending business customers

Summary: Community banks have a history of helping their communities during crises. Some inspiring examples of this support following the recent disasters.

Paleoanthropologists have revealed an amazing new find - a 3.6mm year old skeleton called Little Foot that appears to be the earliest ancestor to humans. Before this, Lucy was the earliest, at half a million years younger than Little Foot. These are certainly some ancient ancestors.

While community banks aren't exactly ancient, they certainly have had a longstanding role in their communities. Given several recent natural disasters and more that will come in the future, we wanted to highlight some of the good work community banks are doing to assist with recovery efforts to help you better prepare.

First of all, we found a MN community bank that makes loans nationwide to small businesses. They are offering a "hurricane relief express loan program" providing 12 month, interest-free, no-fee loans up to \$25k each. These loans are for businesses with damaged properties within FEMA's designated areas of FL and TX. This bank touts a 24 hour response, so borrowers can receive loan proceeds as early as the next day.

It seems to be working, as one business owner that took advantage of that program is a TX veterinarian whose building was flooded by almost two feet of water after Hurricane Harvey. This owner used loan proceeds to not only ensure the building's electrical system was safe before reopening, but the expedited underwriting process enabled him to also buy a mobile vet unit within a week (so he could take care of pets after the flooding).

Next, consider a CA community bank that made expedited loans to those impacted by wildfires. These loans also had more favorable pricing than regular loans. Furthermore, this bank donated \$500 each to 100 particularly needy families identified by a local charity.

Then, a CA community bank not only matched - but doubled employee and director contributions for fire relief. This resulted in a \$15k check that was presented to the American Red Cross. Here, the FHLB even got into the act, by providing an additional \$5k match to the donation (available to all member banks donating to charities' relief efforts).

No help is too small either. Yet another CA community bank distributed smoke masks and bottled water to clients coming into its branches. Even the small stuff matters.

Meanwhile, a TX community bank formed a disaster relief program supporting both its employees and customers. They also partnered with a group of moms to help local families clean up, get diapers, baby wipes, formula and food for children.

Even community banks with no customers in the impacted areas have helped out.

An IN community bank donated \$10k, loaded up several large boxes of supplies, and delivered it all to a nonprofit helping with hurricane relief.

A MA community bank donated \$5,000 to hurricane relief efforts, refunded all ATM card activity and other fees for any of its customers making transactions in any of the impacted areas, rebated all charges from other banks in those same areas, and offered special loan rates to help customers repair or rebuild properties they might have in those areas to help get them back on their feet faster.

A VA community bank pushed its customers to join forces with community banks in the affected regions and make donations. It also offered a secure link to help customers do it.

We know these are only a few of the thousands and thousands of things community banks around the country did to help when these disasters struck, but we wanted to highlight them as examples. Make no bones about it - community bankers live and work together with their customers, so they too are impacted in the same way and they step up to help over and over.

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