

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

Craft-Maintenance Division State of California Unit 12
Locals 3, 39 & 501, AFL-CIO

Union Membership Benefits Camp Fire Victims

The Camp Fire was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history to date. It was the world's costliest natural disaster in 2018. It caused at least 85 civilian fatalities and covered an area of 153,336 acres and destroyed approximately 19,000 structures, with most of the damage occurring in the first four hours of the fire.

The community of Concow and the town of Paradise were destroyed within the first six hours of the fire. Of the 19,000 buildings destroyed, most were homes, along with five public schools in Paradise, a rest home, churches, part of a hospital, a large shopping center, and several fast food restaurants. Nearly 52,000 people were evacuated from the fire zone.

The International Union of Operating Engineers National Charity Fund was established several years ago to provide assistance to Members and their families in times of national or local disasters. The Camp Fire in the Paradise and surrounding areas certainly constitutes a local disaster, as did the devastating fires in Santa Rosa. Local 39 did a search of Members living in the disaster area and contacted them to see if they lost their homes and belongings to the fire and needed support. We found 10 Members of Stationary Engineers, Local 39 who lived in the area and suffered loss. Local 39 helped them with the process of requesting financial assistance and all 10 have received disaster relief checks from both the International Union and from Local 39 to help with the recovery process.

Unfortunately, we also learned of one individual who is part of a Local 39 represented bargaining unit that had losses due to the fire, but who chose not to become a Union Member. Non-members are not eligible for disaster relief assistance and therefore received nothing. It pays to be a Union Member.

UNION STRONG!

Steve Crouch
Director of Public Employees