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TOP STORY

Storm forces hundreds of Pathfinders to evacuate Cam-plex for the night

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A severe thunder storm moves into Gillette on Tuesday evening during the International Pathfinder Camporee.

News Record Photo/Luke Johnson

About 600-900 people from the International Pathfinder Camporee were relocated Tuesday night after thunderstorms swept through Gillette, and several local churches reached out to house Camporee attendees, housing more than 500 of the displaced.

At Cam-plex, 60,000 people are camped out for the Camporee, and many were evacuated from tents and moved into Cam-plex facilities during the storm.

No one was hurt from the storm, according to a report from Camporee media, but the weather brought damage to campsites and flooded certain areas. It also damaged the event stage, moving a large LED screen by 10 feet while also shifting the main left and right pillars of the stage.

The International Village, housing a variety of Pathfinder clubs from around the world, appears to have taken the most damage, with at least 40% of the international campsites wiped out by flooding, Camporee reports.

Both of Gillette's Latter-Day Saints churches were able to house 420 Pathfinders between them. Clark Sanders, Stake President with the Latter-Day Saints church in northeast Wyoming, said that Pathfinders stayed overnight at both churches.

"We took as many people as we possibly could," Sanders said. "Our process really was organizing our members ... so some people had a place to bed down ... then we just waited for people to show up."



Lightning strikes Cam-plex as a severe thunderstorm hits Gillette on Tuesday evening during the International Pathfinder Camporee.

News Record Photo/Luke Johnson

Pathfinders were bussed to both churches starting at 11 p.m. Tuesday, and the last bus arrived at 2 a.m., said Sanders. He said that several local businesses contributed items for the Pathfinders' overnight stay: Walmart donated about six cases of water, and Brianna Bakery was able to give out donuts.

Kim Maran, a spokesperson for the Camporee, said that other churches were also able to take in Pathfinder clubs.

The morning after the storm, Sandi Lohr, director of the Buena Vista Pathfinders out of the Potomac Conference, which includes Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. area churches, said that aside from some flooding around low lying tents, things have mostly settled down.

“Potomac (conference) seems to be good, it’s such a big campus it’s difficult to see who’s in trouble,” Lohr said. “It was a little chaotic last night, but we’re good now.”



By LUKE JOHNSON NEWS RECORD PHOTOGRAPHER ljohnson@gillette news record.net

The six adults and seven kids visiting from the Buena Vista Pathfinder club were forced to take shelter in their 16-by-8 foot trailer during last night’s downpour. All Pathfinders at the camp were advised to seek a hard top shelter.

“We got the message to take cover in a building ... she said hunker down, because we didn't have a lot of time,” Lohr said. “We got into the trailer, and first we went around and prayed ... and then we were just hanging out and singing.”



Tents and shelters are thrown across Cam-plex as a severe thunder storm hits Gillette on Tuesday evening during the International Pathfinder Camporee.

News Record Photo/Luke Johnson

Lohr said their club spent the next 45 minutes singing songs while diving into the snacks they'd packed for the trip. Her husband Sean eventually gave the all clear. The club's tents were able to withstand the wind and rain, but Lohr said she'd heard others were flooded or damaged.

"I think everyone handled it well, not just in our group," Lohr said. "It's muddy, but it's not bad. I think the sun is drying it quickly."

Susan Monaghan