

# LONG-TERM DISASTER RECOVERY

## BEST PRACTICES



*As Told by the Wadena - Otter Tail  
Long Term Recovery Committee*



By Tim King



# **Table of Contents**

## **COMING TO GRIPS**

- \*Long-term recovery takes a long time. Understand as quickly as possible what long-term recovery actually is. Page 2
- \*Learn to understand the difference between disaster response and disaster recovery. Page 2

## **GETTING ORGANIZED**

- \*Organize a long-term recovery committee as quickly as possible. Page 3
- \*Involve the churches in long-term recovery committee formation. Many churches will want to be involved. Some will not. Respect that. Page 3
- \*It helps for the long-term recovery committee members to be involved in the early emergency response. It gives the committee credibility and continuity. Page 3
- \*Form an unmet needs committee. Page 3
- \*Identify the pastors that are going to be the key interactors. Then organize relief for those pastors. Page 4
- \*Involve a regional, or at least local, agency immediately or as soon as possible. They may save you the time and trouble of creating your own organization. Page 5
- \*Do not waste precious time. Consider NOT starting your own tax exempt organization. Page 5
- \*Hire staff. As soon as you can. Page 6
- \*Involve your area's Community Action Program if possible. Many of their existing programs will likely respond to your community's existing emergency needs. By working with them you will be able to stretch your limited dollars and resources. Page 6
- \*It helps for the long-term recovery committee members to be involved in the early emergency response. It gives the committee credibility and continuity. Page 6

\*Focus on low-income people. They have less financial resiliency and capacity for long-term recovery than medium and upper income people. Everyone suffers initially but those with financial resources can recover more quickly. Page 8

**IMPLEMENTING LONG-TERM RECOVERY**

\*Market the disaster. Page 9

\*Find creative ways to communicate with the public. Page 9

\*The local media will grow weary of the story within weeks or a few months. If you just rely on the local media you won't get your message out. Page 9

\*A main street or very visible location for your office can be part of your communications strategy. Page 9

\*Communications and fund raising are not the same thing. They are however, fused at the hip. Page 9

\* Sit down with your local media and work out a system. Discover what works for both the media and the committee. Page 9

\*Fund raising; Refuse to think small! Page 10

\*Everybody can be a fundraiser! Page 10

\*Local governments and politicians are partners in recovery. Make every effort to communicate with them. Page 10

\*Seek funds from conventional and unconventional sources Page 10

\*Churches are critical funding sources Page 10

\*Some of the large national service agencies are not very interested in sharing the data and files that they develop from responding to your community's disaster. Be prepared to accept that and to deal with that. Page 12

\*Get to know the team leaders from the emergency response non-profits, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army, as soon as possible. Page 12

\*Disasters tend to need names. So the tornadoes that struck Otter Tail and Wadena counties became known as the Wadena tornado. Yet villages outside

of Wadena, as well as rural people, suffered substantially. During an already emotional time they felt left out when the storm was called the Wadena tornado. Learn to address that.	Page 13
*Rural communities need to be flexible with volunteers and funding. In rural areas more than houses are damaged. Outbuildings, livestock, and even crop fields need repair and clean up. Some agencies, or organizations, may say that funds or volunteers can only be used to work with house related issues.	Page 13
*Staff and volunteers need an outlet for the pain they are experiencing even if they were not immediate disaster victims.	Page 14
*Be entrepreneurial. Don't tell somebody you can't do it. Find a way to do it.	Page 15
*Respect and honor your volunteers	Page 15
*It's never too early to start organizing for a disaster.	Page 15
*Learn to work with local and outside contractors, furniture stores, etc. You need them and they need you but there can be a tendency for some of them to prey on your community. Create a protocol for what to do when a contractor contacts you for names of disaster victims.	Page 16
*Life does not begin with the disaster. Case managers need to understand that disaster strikes some people whose emotional resources may be drained from a recent death, divorce, illness or other personal difficulty as well as those who are emotionally okay at the time of the disaster. Understanding how life was before the disaster will help a case manager facilitate the long-term recovery of everyone.	Page 18
<b><u>VOLUNTEERS</u></b>	
*If you want volunteers, there are times that you will need to market your disaster.	Page 19
*One of the most important things to keep in mind when you are working with volunteers is that you have to provide a good volunteer experience.	Page 19
*Have volunteers spend time with the clients that they are helping, if at all possible.	Page 19
*Get to know your volunteers before they arrive.	Page 19
*Keep flexibility in mind when working with volunteers. Volunteers as well as the organization need to be flexible.	Page 20

*You will on occasion get some volunteer groups that are a little higher maintenance than others. They may need more direct supervision and are not easily left alone on a project.	Page	20
*Be patient with volunteers.	Page	20
*Some jobs aren't for volunteers.	Page	21
*Some volunteers aren't right for some projects.	Page	21
*Keep in touch with volunteers working on projects.	Page	21
*Sometimes you have to tell volunteers we can't use you at this time.	Page	21
*Long-term recovery is a team effort.	Page	22

## **APPENDICES**

*Appendix A: Receipt and waiver of mechanic's lien rights	Page	24
*Appendix B: Resource Links	Page	25
*Appendix C: Individuals involved in the interviews	Page	26
*Appendix D: Volunteer Liability Release Form	Page	27
*Appendix E: Volunteer Intake	Page	28
*Appendix F: Volunteer Tracking Log Sheet	Page	30
*Appendix G: Group Volunteer Intake	Page	31
*Appendix H: Client Intake Form	Page	32
*Appendix I: Disaster Response Homeowner Release of Liability	Page	35
*Appendix J: How to do Case Management	Page	36
*Appendix K: Disaster Response Case Management Criteria	Page	37
*Appendix L: Early City Statistics	Page	38



# Introduction



**On June 17, 2010** multiple tornadoes, including an EF4 tornado, devastated a long and wide swath of farms and homes in eastern Otter Tail and western Wadena counties in Central Minnesota. The extensive damage included a large portion of the town of Wadena.

While engaged in the immediate disaster response in town and in the neighboring rural areas, an awareness of the need for something more began to grow in the minds of some community leaders. Those men and women began to understand that the disaster would not be over after the rubble was picked up or even when the houses were repaired. They began to understand that the damage and trauma inflicted by the storm would be with many community members for years. The Wadena-Ottertail Long Term Recovery Committee was the result of that growing realization.

"The communities of Otter Tail and Wadena counties have been blessed with exceptional generosity and outstanding local leadership in response to the devastation created by those tornadoes," Long Term Recovery Committee members said. "Ours has been an inspiring journey and we wish to share our practical lessons with others. The following Best Practices summarize what our committee has learned as we try to heal our community and ourselves."

If you are a member of a community that has been damaged by a storm, flood, or any sort of disaster, it is our hope that you will find these Best Practices useful as you begin the long process of making your community whole again. The speakers in this narrative are members of our committee or employees of the committee. Their narratives are from recorded interviews.

***Reading Tip:*** *If you are viewing this document on a computer screen and having trouble seeing the text clearly, try increasing the % zoom in Adobe Reader or using the "View" menu, select "Actual Size."*



## Coming To Grips

### **Best Practices:**

*\*Long-term recovery takes a long time. Understand as quickly as possible what long-term recovery actually is.*

*\*Learn to understand the difference between disaster response and disaster recovery.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Dave:* I finally came to comprehend the meaning of that (long-term recovery) on the 17th of August (2010) when we had a group of people here from Siren, Wisconsin. They were the long-term recovery committee and they were completing their sixth year of work following a similar tornado disaster. Having never been involved with a disaster like this I, like everyone else, was focused on trees to remove, homes to repair, people to find homes for. I was focused on the disaster response, not the disaster recovery. Disaster response is what happens moments after the initial response and for the next five or six weeks. It's focused on fixing things, putting people back in houses, healing people, and reorganizing the infrastructure of the community so it can function. When the danger is gone the fire departments and police from other towns go home.

*Del:* It's very apparent that when you're about two or three weeks into that (response) they say we're out of here and you better be ready. They did that.

*Dave:* For us long-term recovery started about six to eight weeks after the event. Its principle focus is to identify and look at who are the people who have needs associated with this disaster that cannot be met with their own resources. Who are the people that have significant unmet needs and how can we go about meeting them?

Simultaneously, there is money being accumulated through donations. Part of the long-term recovery is that somebody has to assume the accountability and responsibility of properly utilizing those resources. The money started coming in right away. Dealing with that is a key piece to long-term recovery.

*Dave:* I think the first big challenge was learning to understand that long-term recovery is more about healing than it is about fixing and replacing things. You start realizing, in the days and weeks after a disaster, if you are intimately involved in the response you become emotionally and physically exhausted and in pain. You begin to encounter people at a much more intimate level and people begin to have conversations with you about how hurt they are psychologically and emotionally and how scared they are. You begin to understand that we need to replace this person's fence that's gone but that's not really this person's first priority. The first priority is in the fact that I spent an hour and a half in conversation with this person and we never talked about fixing the fence. You begin to understand that this long-term recovery process is going to be more about emotional and psychological healing. I don't use the word counseling. It's not counseling, it's really . . . where the church leadership comes from is that it takes compassion to go forth and listen, share, and care even if they don't have any answer. Even if they don't have any professional preparation for being a solution resource. They are just a caring person.

## Getting Organized

### **Best Practices:**

*\*Organize a long-term recovery committee as quickly as possible.*

*\*Involve the churches in long-term recovery committee formation. Many churches will want to be involved. Some will not. Respect that.*

*\*It helps for the long-term recovery committee members to be involved in the early emergency response. It gives the committee credibility and continuity.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

**Del:** Within two or three days after the disaster, some of the emergency response folks were from the Methodist and Lutheran organizations. They are about long-term recovery and they were here to help us start to think about how you do that. Duane Hanson of Lutheran Disaster Response asked us to start thinking about who would be trusted members of the community. We began to put a list together. He told us that typically the church has a significant role in that and the church will typically organize the process. We had our first meeting in the third or fourth week of July. We weren't sure what to do. We had a lot of questions about whether we should be a non-profit so we could handle the funds. We had to organize to get staff hired. We had to get a place to do our work, and get the word out to the community.

### **Best Practice:**

*\*Form an unmet needs committee.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

**Wendy:** If there weren't any unmet needs, there wouldn't be a long-term recovery committee.

**Tim:** How does that process work?

**Wendy:** In the first two sessions that I have with a client, I try and figure out what their unmet needs are. To do that I figure out if they have insurance. If they do have insurance I figure out what their insurance reimbursement is going to be. There are a lot of variables that can go into that.

Then we have a prioritization system. For example, if you were underinsured you get one point and if you were uninsured you get two points. The point system was given to us by Lutheran Social Services. It was one of the resources they gave us on how to do case management. (See Disaster Response Case Management Criteria form in the Appendix K.)

Most of the time people don't have receipts and quotes for everything they are going to need, so they don't know exactly what the number for their unmet need is. But they can pretty much give you a guess. Most of the time when they guesstimate it is lower than what it will cost. They don't realize how much it will cost to replace a home. You don't think of the curtains or the light cover switches or the ceiling fans. I learned by doing this job. I had no previous experience.

I get all of the information on a client and put it



on a spreadsheet. Then I take it to the unmet needs committee. We have a committee of four to five people. We meet every two weeks for an hour before the regular long-term recovery committee meeting. We get all of our unmet needs approved at that meeting and then we can report to the long-term recovery committee what the overall situation is. They get the big picture, but at the unmet needs committee everything is confidential.

Diane Leaders from Community Action is one of the people on the committee. She was a great person to have on there because she knows about all the programs Community Action has, such as health insurance, food assistance, and others. I could come to the committee and say I have a person who needs this and this and she'd say we have a program for that. So our client could use not only our resources but let's say they needed their rent or utilities paid. Community Action could probably help them with that. That would allow us to extend our resources.

*Diane:* Wendy's eligibility guidelines are much looser than mine or the county's, so she is able to do work we can't do. Sometime we pay rent, and she pays car repairs or car insurance, because rent fits into our CAC (Community Action) guidelines, but car repairs and insurance usually do not. The unmet needs committee contains a pastor, Wendy, a retired social service worker, an Experience Works supervisor, and me, a CAC worker. We often know of community resources to extend our dollars, or have ideas of some creative way to make things work. We all really believe that the community will do better when we help everyone do better.

*Wendy:* After someone's needs are accepted by the committee, they go out and get estimates and bring them back to me. I make up vouchers and take them to the unmet needs committee and

they decide, based on the prioritization list, if they can approve them. If they do approve them, Diane takes them back to Community Action and, as fiscal agent, writes a check. If they didn't go through I put them in the file for the next meeting or call the client and tell them that it wasn't considered an unmet need at this time due to funding.

Health and safety were our initial priorities for unmet needs. Then our priority became getting people back into their homes. Later it was being sure everybody's home could sustain the winter. Every few months we evaluate what the needs are and switch our priorities to that. Sometimes something will come up from those earlier priorities and we have to address it. (See How to Do Case Management in the Appendix J. Also see Client Intake form in Appendix H.)

### **Best Practice:**

*\*Identify the pastors that are going to be the key interactors. Then organize relief for those pastors.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Del:* I was fortunate to have support from my congregation. I also had support from a neighboring parish that provided me with pulpit time. My bishop realized that if I was going to do more and to provide leadership, he needed to cut me some slack. He did that. He did everything he could and he got things done.

## **Best Practice:**

*\*Involve a regional, or at least local, agency immediately or as soon as possible. They may save you the time and trouble of creating your own organization.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Dave:* You have to put aside the politics and do what is best for the community and those people who are hurting. You need a coordinated way to do this so that everyone isn't fighting over their piece of the project. If you don't do that, you will create mistrust and the residents will suffer. We needed somebody that we could trust.

For us that was the Community Action Council (CAC). If the Action Council had not agreed to do two things for us, we would have been significantly impaired. First they showed up the day after the storm with a considerable amount of money. They were to do some things that nobody else was able to do. That \$10,000 really got us going. The second thing they did for us was when it came time to take money that was donated and move it some place where it could be centrally located, they had a legitimacy in the area that everybody respected.

*Del:* Because we were able to agree that the funds from various sources would go to one spot, we were way ahead in that we were able to use every penny to the best of our ability without wasting it.

*Dave:* That's an advantage that you have in a small community . . . you don't have a lot of competing nonprofits.

## **Best Practice:**

*\*Do not waste precious time. Consider NOT starting your own tax-exempt organization.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Dave:* We had to decide whether we were going to choose to form our own 501(c)(3) (non-profit tax-exempt organization) or use an existing one.

The first couple of meetings we had were a waste of time because nobody knew who would employ the staff and write the paychecks and do all the work a legal entity would do. It wasn't until the third meeting that Lutheran Disaster Response (Lutheran Social Services) said they would be that organization. They knew how to do it and we were just a collection of people.

It would have helped us if somebody had stepped forward right away and explained what a long-term recovery committee is.

*Tanya:* The CAC is our fiscal agent. They handle all the donations and grants and make the disbursement of those funds. Lutheran Social Services contracts with the staff. Funds designated for staffing and administration are sent from CAC to Lutheran Social Services (LSS). They take care of the payroll and office rent. Wendy, Ted, and I are contract employees with LSS. We are working under their liability coverage.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Hire staff as soon as you can.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Del:* We were overwhelmed by the amount of data we had to keep track of. Just names and addresses and phone numbers, hundreds of them.

*Dave:* We visited 115 farms in three plus months, keeping track of their contact information and what volunteers we've sent to where.

*Del:* We wouldn't have gotten it done without staff.

*Tanya:* You need someone who doesn't have other jobs or responsibilities, to dedicate themselves to this. Volunteers may get the initial contact information but often getting people to be our client was a very long process. We just had someone call today, 18 months after the tornado, who has finally come to the conclusion that they need help. Every time you make that contact with them, you get a little more of the story and they open up a little more. It takes a long time to build that relationship. If it was all volunteers, every time somebody would come to their door it would be someone new.

Note: The Wadena-Otter Tail Long Term Recovery Committee has three employees: a case manager, a volunteer manager, and a construction manager.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Involve your area's Community Action Program if possible. Many of their existing programs will likely respond to your community's existing emergency*

*needs. By working with them, you will be able to stretch your limited dollars.*

*\*It helps for the long-term recovery committee members to be involved in the early emergency response. It gives the committee credibility and continuity.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Diane:* My Community Action agency has emergency service programs for housing and shelter. We also have an agency mission to help people help themselves to become more self-sufficient. The reason we could help in this emergency is because of our agency mission and because we have a department that can help with emergency funding. We had staff capable of responding and we had programs in place.

Because we were in place with those programs, we were able to contact our state (Office of Economic Opportunity) people and say we have a large-scale emergency here and can we have emergency funds right now. Within five or ten minutes of the phone call they were able to give us \$10,000 for emergency needs for the people in the tornado area. They have emergency funds. That was above and beyond what we already had on hand. We had the tornado Thursday night and I was able to go to a 9 a.m. meeting Friday morning and announce that they had given us an extra \$10,000 for tornado victims.

I was able to see first hand what the extent of the tornado damage was and our agency was linked to people that could help. That is one of the reasons I believe a Community Action Program can be helpful, especially one that has emergency housing programs.

*Tim:* But you don't think Community Action agencies will always be able to be of assistance in a disaster like this?

*Diane:* No. It won't always work. There are 27 different community action agencies in Minnesota and many more nation-wide. They all have different programs. So, the fact that our agency could help this time doesn't mean that next time there is a disaster the community action agency in that area will be able to help. This is a great opportunity for Community Action but it doesn't mean they will all jump on this. Lakes and Prairies Community Action in Moorhead and West Central Community Action out of Elbow Lake have done some work with the flood response. There is some recent history of other Community Action Councils helping out in disasters but there are also some examples of Community Action not helping.

*Tim:* Will that \$10,000 state grant be available in all disasters?

*Diane:* That's not going to be available all of the time by any means.

*Tim:* How did Community Action become the fiscal agent for the Long Term Recovery Committee?

*Diane:* I was doing emergency housing immediately Thursday (the day of the tornado) night and I worked through the whole weekend and brought my whole department here on Monday morning. On Monday morning Lakes Radio of Fergus Falls came to us and said we heard about the disaster and we know you are directly involved and we want to do a fund raiser on the radio right now to raise money to help. That was another connection we had before the disaster. They came to us because they knew what we did. In a week or two they raised another \$20,000. Having those networks in place before the disaster helped us immensely when the disaster happened.

The mayor was having daily meetings with the community to talk about what services were available. Each agency would report on what they were doing. I would get up and say I was the one designated to work on emergency housing. Those daily meetings eventually turned into meetings where we were discussing what are we going to do long-term. It was somewhat of a natural transition because I was already there and because I had my agency's support and because we served both Otter Tail and Wadena County. There were other non-profit agencies that could possibly have served as fiscal host but we were the only ones serving both counties.

Money was coming into our agency through Lakes Radio and the State so it seemed logical to us because we already had the 501(c)(3) status to be the fiscal host for the long-term recovery. They didn't have to create one because we were already there.

I'm proud that my agency got involved. We had not had a disaster of this magnitude before but when it happened we got involved immediately. I drove to Wadena the night of the storm to check on family members. When I got to Wadena I realized that we had a huge disaster. So I called my boss and told him about the scale of the disaster and asked his permission to work that night and the next day. He dropped what he was doing and came to help me. He was on board immediately. He was experiencing it first hand. He saw how we could help with emergency housing.

*Tim:* Does Community Action still support your effort?

*Diane:* Now, over a year and a half later, I still have complete support of my executive director. I would say that the rest of my agency does not really understand the significance of long-term

recovery and recuperation. Part of that is that I haven't worked systematically to help them understand. I talk about it at staff meetings but perhaps I should be sending staff members to those long-term recovery meetings. It's not like they are opposed, but they don't really have a buy into it.

they kept their employment here and they kept their children in the school and kept our community strong. We helped them and they helped us in return. That's one good definition of community.

## **Best Practice:**

*\*Focus on low-income people. They have less financial resiliency and capacity for long-term recovery than medium and upper income people. Everyone suffers initially but those with financial resources can recover more quickly.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Diane:* There were three groups of people that were affected. There were the people who had good income, had good insurance, and had the ability to work with their insurance adjuster and get things solved. There were two other groups: the underinsured and the uninsured. Usually that came with the inability to work with their insurance company to get things done. Those two groups of people were the ones the long-term recovery committee and we at Community Action focused on. They not only needed our financial help but they needed our advocacy and they needed education on what to do next and when to do it.

By helping those people, we helped strengthen the broader community. Wadena County is very impoverished. If we had lost these people, if they had packed up and moved to another town, they wouldn't have gotten back on their feet as quickly as they did by staying here in their community. And, since we helped them get on their feet,



# Implementing Long-Term Recovery



## Best Practices:

*\*Market the disaster.*

*\*Find creative ways to communicate with the public.*

*\*The local media will grow weary of the story within weeks or a few months. If you just rely on the local media, you won't get your message out.*

*\*A main street or very visible location for your office can be part of your communications strategy.*

*\*Communications and fund raising are not the same thing. They are, however, fused at the hip.*

*\*Sit down with your local media and work out a system. Discover what works for both the media and the committee.*

## Wadena-Otter Tail story:

*Tim:* The Long Term Recovery Committee used a wide variety of media to communicate with local, regional, and national audiences. Here is a partial list:

### Communication Methods

- \*Facebook
- \*Twitter
- \*Web page
- \*Email
- \*Local radio station
- \*Local newspaper
- \*Minnesota Public Radio
- \*Catholic Diocese newspaper
- \*Lutheran Synod newsletter
- \*PowerPoint presentations
- \*YouTube Videos
- \*A book project with the historical society

*Del:* In the committee structure, we had marketing and media. We had somebody assigned to

that and their job was to figure out all the ways that we could get it done.

We learned right away to use social media as best as we could. I advise using it even if you don't know how. We created a couple of Facebook pages and we got Twitter going. We put a lot of time into a better website. One of our volunteers, who is a website developer, put our website together. She had other media connections, so that doubled the effort. In a disaster like that, people show up with skills and you have to figure out the best way to use them.

YouTube is great. You don't have to have any fancy equipment. You can write a little script and if you have people that are willing to open up it works well. One of our videos was by a resident that had damage to his home. He's good at communicating. He came in and told the story of coming into the Recovery Center and taking inventory to see if there were any needs he had for working with the Recovery Center. That worked well and we spread that around. We got more people to come in because of that video.

*Tim:* How did you use email?

*Del:* One of the things that we did was ask each volunteer that we had if we could use their email list. We didn't want to take over their email list. They were responsible for it. We gave them some prepared messages to send out to their list of friends.

*Tim:* How did that help you?

*Del:* It was for meetings and fund raising opportunities. We expanded our reach to other areas of the country that way. We got contributions from across the country. We had one connection – I don't even know how it happened. This person

had lived here and had relatives in the area and was a pastor and director of a bible camp in Pennsylvania. It was their practice to have the kids practice good stewardship. So they would have a project they would collect money for. That summer they raised \$10,000 and they gave it to us.

*Tim:* How did the public radio connection work?

*Del:* We were able to make connections with Minnesota Public Radio and then public television. Public radio assigned some of their better reporters and they were able to go out for a full day of interviews of tornado survivors. They did it in a very respectful way and, because it was very personal stuff, they allowed people to listen to it before broadcasting it. That was very powerful. Minnesota Public Radio goes around the region.

*Tim:* You said that a PowerPoint presentation was very helpful in telling the story of the tornado and for raising funds. How did that work?

*Del:* Our high school English class gave the 10th grade students an assignment to use modern technology to tell a story. One of the farm kids whose family had heavy damage from the tornado put together a powerful PowerPoint presentation. It showed what happened and it told the story of the strength of the family in the time of disaster. We got permission from the student, her family, and the teacher to use that in every way we could. We showed that to church groups, civic groups, and anybody who wanted to have us talk to them. We raised money because of that.

*Tim:* Your relationship with the local media wasn't always perfect. Can you talk about that situation?

*Del:* Our local newspaper was the tough part.

They got tired of the story and they didn't think there was any value in keeping things updated. We had to really pursue them to get them to show up and talk to us. It seems to me that a best practice would be that you sit down with your local media and work out a system. Discover what works for both the media and the committee. We should have got with them right away and worked something out. You should be able to count on regular local news reports to help the work of the long-term recovery committee. I think you need to let them know they are an important part of long-term recovery.

The radio station was willing to give us more stuff free. They were willing to put any news we needed to get out on the air. They offered upwards of half-hour interviews for free. We did those four or five times.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Fund raising: Refuse to think small!*

*\*Everybody can be a fundraiser!*

*\*Local governments and politicians are partners in recovery. Make every effort to communicate with them.*

*\*Seek funds from conventional and unconventional sources*

*\*Churches are critical funding sources.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Del:* The most important part of long-term recovery is our case workers working directly with the tornado survivors and getting them con-

nected to resources. The second most important part of recovery is fund raising so those resources can work. We put a lot of time into that and it paid off in big ways. We've raised nearly \$700,000 (March 2012) because of a lot of work by a lot of people.

Everybody had a responsibility for fund raising. We didn't divide that out. We had the committee members driving across northwestern Minnesota to make PowerPoint presentations. In some cases those were 250 miles away.

*Tim:* Churches played a critical role as a source of funds. Can you talk about the Committee's experience with that?

*Del:* There were many levels where churches played a role. I'm a part of the Northwestern Minnesota Lutheran Synod. We got permission from the bishop and the synod council to go to every conference and make the PowerPoint presentation that we had. What that did was that the bishops offered a challenge of \$2.00 per baptized member to the conferences. We probably got \$125,000 from that effort.

The fun part of that was that the bishops from that group and the Catholic bishop from the St. Cloud Diocese had already been talking. They challenged each other. Then we were able to offer the same kind of challenge locally. So the parish priests and the Lutheran pastors kept going back and forth with what we were going to do and how we were going to do it better. That was a lot of fun. When you are in a disaster you need to put your own differences aside.

*Tim:* That idea of putting your differences aside really matters. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. You experienced it both ways.

*Del:* That's true. We approached even the normal way of raising funds locally by thinking big. A pancake fundraiser where you get \$300 isn't worth it. Before we went into the village of Almora (Otter Tail County) there were four churches in Parkers Prairie (near Almora) that wanted to be involved in recovery in Almora. We worked with them over a three-month period and they got a lot of their people involved. That extended the reach of the project. They didn't have only a dozen people involved. They had 100 people involved. When you do that you multiply the crowd in a big way. They raised \$10,000. That was one four-hour meal. They had most of the town of Parkers Prairie in attendance. My advice is don't waste your time on a little effort. It's a lot more fun to do it this way. It was kind of a celebration.

With the Parkers Prairie project, if the egos of those pastors had gotten in the way, it would have been ruined. We weren't able to have a big fundraiser like that in Wadena because pastors' egos were involved.

*Tim:* One of the really interesting developments was your relationship with Fergus Falls. What was that about?

*Del:* The city of Fergus Falls kind of adopted Wadena as a sister city during the tornado recovery. For the month of March 2011 (9 months

### **Some Ways the Long Term Recovery Committee Raised Money**

- \*Individual community presentations
- \*Community suppers and concerts
  - \*Individual churches
  - \*Church dioceses and synods
  - \*Email & social media
- \*City, county, & state government

- \*Individual contributions
- \*Foundation grants
- \*Sister city partnerships
- \*Community organizations
- \*Radio campaigns



after the tornado) every organization in the City of Fergus Falls was supposed to figure out how they could raise some money, or volunteers, to help us. Because of that we had the opportunity to work with a lot more volunteers. I'm not sure, but I think \$30,000 to \$40,000 was raised as a result of that. I don't really know how that happened but it was probably the leadership of the churches. There were two churches there that were amazing,

*Tim:* How important was your relationship with public officials?

*Del:* You can't be shy. That's a fund raising rule. You've got to be willing to step in front of a camera or sit down with politicians.

I've talked to our politicians including going to our U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives last spring. That was worth while. They knew that our tornado was still there. Talking to the senators in particular helped, especially with city infrastructure. We also went down to St. Paul to talk to state legislators a couple of times.

But our most time was spent speaking to township, city, and county officials. You really need to keep in good communication with those folks every step of the way in every way imaginable.

You need to be accountable to the community in what they've given you for funding. In 2011 we asked the Otter Tail County Commissioners for assistance and they gave us \$50,000 in matching funds. We had to match their contribution. That kept us going last year. We also had to keep them informed on our progress and show them our financial statements.

This year we went back to Otter Tail County again and put out our hands begging for money. Begging was really what we were doing. They

were willing to match it again with twenty-some thousand dollars. We had to agree not to go back again after the end of August to ask for more money. The Wadena County Commissioners and the Wadena City Council came up with matching funds.

*Tim:* What are some of the foundation grants you've applied for?

*Del:* Our biggest grant that we received was from the Bremer Foundation. Recently we applied to the Margaret Cargill Foundation. We received a number of one and two thousand-dollar grants.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Some of the large national service agencies are not very interested in sharing the data and files that they develop from responding to your community's disaster. Be prepared to accept that and to deal with that.*

*\*Get to know the team leaders from the emergency response non-profits, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army, as soon as possible.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Dave:* During the disaster response time, where so much work is being done, our observation is that some non-profits fail to have the perspective that when they are gone there are a lot of people back here that have to do a whole lot of work that they are not involved in. They don't understand that some of the work that they (the non-profits) do could be critically helpful after they leave. If the Red Cross, when it went out and surveyed all of those people, had given that information to us, or given us a way of qualifying to get that information, it could have made our long-term recov-

ery process so much more efficient. It would have given us the opportunity to start with so much more momentum. As it was, we had to go back out and gather all of that information. Some of the people we had to gather the information from were like, "why are you here again? I already gave you this information."

*Del:* Well, that lends itself to a little more mistrust in the process. It makes you look like a fool.

*Dave:* The other thing that happens is that there are all of these opportunists that follow every significant storm. So there are all of these people that are knocking on people's doors. You have no idea who the person was that knocked on the door before or two or three days ago. The disaster victim is in a state of shock and stress. Getting the information again is a step of redundancy that serves no value. It builds stress levels even higher. It slows us down. The information (that the Red Cross obtained) is information we are going to get anyhow. It seemed to us that the people who gathered that information and left with it served the purposes that they understood of their organization and did not look outside their organization to see who else would benefit.

*Del:* What I heard afterwards, though, was that with the Red Cross, the problem was with the regional supervisor. There was supposed to be a change in that.

*Dave:* The point is that just because someone is there doing something, it is not necessarily going to work to your benefit. You need to organize for the benefit of your community because the rest of the world isn't going to do it.

*Tim:* What can the community expect from the Red Cross or other non-profits?

*Del:* Their purpose is strictly for emergency response immediately after the disaster.

*Dave:* They will overwhelm you with their capacity to get things done. Immediately following the storm they show up with people, experience, food, trucks, trailers. They know how to make things happen and how to get food and water out to people in the streets. How to cause people to come in and get food. They know how to cause people to look at what they need to know as far as safeguarding themselves. They will come in with such a head of steam it will take your breath away.

Their shortcoming is that organizations of that kind are part of large organizations so they have a certain bureaucratic process that they live in. Entrepreneurial variation from their theme is not easy to accomplish. So you are highly dependent on the personality of the person leading that team. If the person leading that team happens to come from a small town, and you are a small town, they can relate to everything that's going on probably even better than you can. If the team leader comes from a large city who has no ability to relate to a small town, they probably are not going to be able to anticipate and read what isn't happening and make it happen.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Disasters tend to need names. So the tornadoes that struck Otter Tail and Wadena counties became known as the Wadena Tornado. Yet villages outside of Wadena, as well as rural people, suffered substantially. During an already emotional time they felt left out when the storm was called the Wadena Tornado. Learn to address that.*

*\*Rural communities need to be flexible with volunteers and funding. In rural areas more than houses are damaged. Outbuildings, livestock, and even crop fields need repair and clean up. Some agencies,*

*or organizations, may say that funds or volunteers can only be used to work with house related issues. Learn to address that.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Dave:* One of the tremendous advantages we had was that Del is a pastor of two small country churches and one town church and he lives in town. What happens when you are involved in a rural disaster is that the disaster is named after the town: The Wadena Tornado. And you have 135 farms and businesses just outside of town and nobody is writing about them and nobody is talking about them. You see aerial photos of the town of Wadena. We immediately realized that the way to overcome not only the storm damage but also the feelings of abandonment was to have a direct one-to-one interaction with those people. To physically demonstrating that they had not been forgotten. We named ourselves the Wadena-Otter Tail Long Term Recovery Committee. We wanted both of those words up front to demonstrate to people that this was not something that was happening just in Wadena. Many of the farmers that had storm damage outside of Wadena were members of Del's congregations.

*Del:* We tried to visit as many as we could. We didn't get everybody. We visited some of them several times because of the severe damage they had. For some of the rural areas the immediate disaster relief took longer. It was up to eight to twelve weeks after the storm. In town they were kind of done with that by three weeks. They were still doing it in the rural areas by the end of August and September.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Staff and volunteers need an outlet for the pain they are experiencing even if they were not immediate disaster victims.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Tim:* Who do you tell your stories to?

*Tanya:* Staff has been very good at talking to each other. It is hard to walk away at the end of the day and not keep all these things in your mind. You always feel there is more you should do or want to do. It's very hard to know where to stop. Last year at this time a lot of people would just come in the office to talk. They just needed to talk. That is less now (in January 2012). When you have a conversation with a person and then they walk out the door, it's very hard to put their problems down and move on. If it weren't for people who are part of this committee who you can talk to, I don't know how people would be able to do a job like this. Being part of the lives of those who were affected by the tornado has changed me completely.

*Del:* We have had some extreme cases and you wonder, how did those people make it through? Then we wonder about our ability to help some of them. What are we going to do, we wonder? Our community has had enough resources and gumption to keep at it.

*Dave:* I frequently had to run away. You need to run away and get refreshed so you can continue to help. We listened to one man being interviewed and you could see how emotional he was. How he was trying to control his emotions. He told the interviewer that his brother had a similar storm and it did this and that damage, and it took that storm ten years to kill his brother. But

that storm killed him. You could see he was afraid the same thing would happen to him.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Be entrepreneurial. Don't tell somebody you can't do it. Find a way to do it.*

*\*Respect and honor your volunteers.*

*\*It's never too early to start organizing for a disaster.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Tim:* What is entrepreneurial?

*Dave:* You have to be able to respond to the need and get done what ever needs doing. You can't spend a lot of time planning or organizing. If someone needs help you need to be able to say yes even if you don't know how.

*Del:* If there is a crisis you don't say no, we can't do it.

*Dave:* During the response phase, Del and I were going out to all of these farms. There is a volunteer conduit coordination in Wadena. It's just like an hourglass. All of the volunteers have to come to this point and then they send them out. So we have 45 kids coming on a bus. Del and I are at this check-in center at seven in the morning and the Sheriff's deputy says you need to bring them in here to town. We said that's not going to happen. The deputy said we had to. We said that if you need forms signed why don't you send one of your people over here at nine o'clock and meet us. We'll put her on the bus and she can get all the forms signed that you need. That will get the kids out in the field sooner and I'll take her back to her car.

*Del:* That's entrepreneurial.

*Dave:* The bus arrived at nine and we had 45 kids walking the field at 9:15. They were doing what they came to do.

Not only do you have to be entrepreneurial. You also have to respect the volunteers. Why is it that the busload of 45 teenagers came? They came because leaders said this is an opportunity for them to learn and grow. If you tied them up in a parking lot, where they would do nothing, you would create the probability that 40 of those 45 kids would never volunteer to do anything again.

*Diane:* I wonder if flexible might be a better word than entrepreneurial. I think Dave and Del saw a need that was not being addressed by the agencies and organizations that were coming to town. They just went out and got the job done. They went out and filled a need without waiting to fill it through any formal channel. My husband went out on one of their teams because he had been waiting at the Pamida parking lot (official volunteer gathering place) for 45 minutes. He was frustrated because he didn't have an assignment. I called Del and he said meet us at such and such a place and they put him to work. What they did worked

I don't know what would have happened if something had gone wrong but nothing did go wrong. I don't believe just anybody could have done this. There were risks involved with what they did, but I guess that is entrepreneurial.

*Dave:* When you get to long-term recovery, that is different. The first thing that I would say to somebody in long-term recovery is that you need to find out if it is Lutheran Social Services or Catholic Charities or what . . . but one of the church organizations will show up at your disaster who have experience organizing people and

disaster long-term recovery. You need one of those organizations to tell you what this is about and to train you to do it.

Del had spent years organizing a ministerial association in Wadena so there was a strong ministerial core in the community. There were men and women who trusted each other. So, as a consequence, when Lutheran Social Services stepped forward and said Lutheran Disaster Response will be your training organization and we will employ your people, there were no objections. They said you need to fund your long-term recovery effort but we will be the mechanism through which that works. None of the other churches had any resistance to that. The Catholic money, Methodist and Episcopalian money, it all went into a bank account with a Lutheran name on it.

### **Best Practice:**

*\*Learn to work with local and outside contractors, furniture stores, etc. You need them and they need you but there can be a tendency for some of them to prey on your community. Create a protocol for what to do when a contractor contacts you for names of disaster victims.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Tim:* The Wadena-Otter Tail Long Term Recovery Committee witnessed fraudulent activity in the months following the tornado. We discussed two of them.

*Wendy:* The God Warrior Truck was a contractor from Alexandria. He had a gorgeous truck with "God Warrior" painted on it. He looked legitimate. He even had his contractor license number on his truck. He seemed to know who would

respond to his religious message and could be suckered and not ask many questions. He went to those people.

So the deal was, somebody would write a check out for materials to repair a roof, the work got done, and people thought that The God Warrior was pretty nice. Then they'd get a notice from the courts saying there's a mechanic's lien on their home from the lumber company. The lumber company never got paid. The God Warrior charged the materials from the lumber company to the homeowner.

Homeowners should have a form that the contractor signs that says all work has been done and all materials paid for. You sign that so you can't have a lien on your home. Every client should receive this form early in the process. They should put it in the folder that they hand out to people at the Disaster Response Center right after the disaster. (Note: The form is a mechanic's lien waiver of rights and is often provided to homeowners by the contractor. A mechanic's lien waiver form can be found in the appendix of this document)

*Tanya:* People are in a state of shock and sometimes they don't even remember what they did. They are very susceptible to being cheated.

*Tim:* You had a volunteer contractor that cheated storm victims? What did he do?

*Wendy:* He went to a client to do a volunteer project and he made side deals with them. He took money from them for work he never intended to do. He still has not done it. He built trust with us. He knew people I knew. His dad's a pastor.

*Tanya:* I tell volunteers that we are here for the homeowner. If they don't agree to that they will

have to not do the work. With this person there were hours of phone conversation before he ever came here and got started. With all of us. Our expectation when he came here was different than at the end. When he came here he had certain projects that he was going to do but things snowballed. We should probably have said we need to stop here before you get committed to too many things on our behalf. He gave a lot to our community in time and equipment.

*Wendy:* For three months solid he did exactly what he promised. May, June, and July. Then he began with the side deals. Afterward, our supervisor suggested that in the future a volunteer might have a one-month limit. Then perhaps they have to reapply to be a volunteer. When you think about it though, that's kind of difficult to do. You don't want to insult volunteers.

*Tanya:* He had disaster response in his organization's name. He had a 501(c)(3) (tax exempt organization) for disaster response. We checked his license, insurance, and articles of incorporation. Now he has fraud claims against him in North Dakota and Joplin, Missouri.

*Wendy:* I think I've learned that if it's too good to be true it probably is. A volunteer contractor promised us the moon and the stars and now I almost feel like somebody who has gone through a disaster myself. He took not only our clients and myself but also the committee and the community.

*Tim:* Disaster recovery committees may not be able to avoid all fraud. But the Wadena-Otter Tail stories may help. Below are some tips from the Minnesota Departments of Public Safety and Labor and Industry on how recovery committees and homeowners can avoid fraud.

\*Contractors should be required to register with

the local government authority impacted by the disaster.

\*Be sure that contractors' state licensing status be checked as a part of the registration process.

\*It is illegal for municipalities to charge a fee for registering contractors.

\*Contractors who are registered should be provided with credentials that can be presented to homeowners.

\*The impacted community should be educated that all contractors are to register with the local government authority and not to accept solicitations from contractors without credentials.

\*The community should be educated to report any contractors without credentials to the local government authority.

\*The community should be educated that all government representatives (HSEM, FEMA, SBA) are required to display credentials with their photos while working in the field AND that those representatives do not make contractor referrals.

\*Long-term disaster recovery committees should work with the Minnesota Department of Commerce to monitor insurance adjuster complaints.

\*Long-term disaster recovery committees should work with the Department of Labor and Industry regarding contractor procedures.

\*Long-term disaster recovery committees should conduct spot checks to ensure all contractors have credentials.

## **Best Practice:**

*\*Life does not begin with the disaster. Case managers need to understand that disaster strikes some people whose emotional resources may be drained from a recent death, divorce, illness, or other personal difficulty, as well as those who are emotionally okay at the time of the disaster. Understanding how life was before the disaster will help a case manager facilitate the long-term recovery of everyone.*

*Del:* When you do long-term recovery, you're going to have a variety of clients. As a result, you will necessarily get involved in the details of local politics. You may have to go face-to-face with a county commissioner and tell them that you have a client that is way behind on their taxes and they are going to be homeless if you put their property up for a sheriff's sale.

*Tanya:* We were able to help with that, which in turn allowed us to help with fixing their home.

## **Wadena-Otter Tail story:**

*Tanya:* We have encountered many clients whose lives were chaotic and difficult before the disaster. This disaster was like the last straw. They need a lot more of the emotional support than other people. It goes well beyond financial support. We need to understand where they were prior to the disaster and even sometimes address some of those things. Our focus is disaster and beyond but sometimes those things prior to the disaster need to be addressed. We've been able to provide emotional support and to help connect people with resources to help address some of the issues they had before the tornado.

Some people were in financial trouble before the tornado and afterward they lost what little resources they had remaining. To help them, we had to put together a plan to help them understand what they needed to do to keep going forward. We encountered situations where we couldn't help right away because property taxes or insurance may not have been paid. We had to make sure that they did not lose the help we gave them because of their financial situation. We also had to remind ourselves that we can't fix everything that had happened up to that point.



# Volunteers



## Best Practice

*\*If you want volunteers, there are times that you will need to market your disaster.*

## Wadena-Otter Tail Story

*Tanya:* We had a huge outpouring of volunteers during the emergency response in June and July but when I came in September things were a bit quieter on the volunteer front. People knew that the emergency cleanup had happened, but we needed to get word out that we were ready for the long-term recovery.

When I got here I had to check with some of the organizations, such as Lutheran Disaster Response, to help find volunteers. They helped get the word out to those who were looking for volunteer opportunities. I checked with church organizations, too. Once we got the word out, they have been steadily contacting us. It slowed down during the winter but now they are contacting us again.

We have a list of projects for this spring and summer (2012). We do compete with more recent disasters where there is more urgent need but volunteers will continue to come as long as you keep it out there that you need help.

*Tim:* You mentioned that you had observed two different types of volunteer groups.

*Tanya:* Yes. There are those that want to respond to the emergency and there are those that want to help with the long-term recovery. We have had some of the group come back a second and third time.

## Best Practices:

*\*One of the most important things to keep in mind when you are working with volunteers is that you have to provide a good volunteer experience. Making the experience a good one for volunteers also means assisting in the details of their stay. This can range from having accommodations at local churches, organizing shower facilities, or helping find evening entertainment.*

*\*Have volunteers spend time with the clients that they are helping, if at all possible.*

*\*Get to know your volunteers before they arrive.*

## Wadena-Otter Tail Story:

*Tanya:* Volunteers need to feel that their time was put to good use. They need to know the impact their help is having on their community or the individuals they are working with - particularly when the job isn't a very glamorous one. Sometimes volunteers work on a project and they don't see how they are making a difference. An organization really needs to stress to them what impact they are really having.

We had a farmer that lost everything on his farmstead. All that debris was spread across the fields that he planted and sowed each year. There were about 80 acres close to his home that we needed to clean up. It was a huge undertaking. If he and his family set out to do that it would take them a considerable amount of time. We had a youth group of about 35 kids with a few adult chaperones. They worked on that project. It was hot and tedious. It wasn't much fun tramping through the field. The volunteers really didn't understand the significance of what they were



doing. We sat down with the farmer and we expressed our appreciation to the volunteers. We explained to the volunteers how long it would be before life could get back to normal and before they could resume farming. They finally got it. They realized how important what they were doing was to this family.

*Tim:* Sometimes it's difficult for clients and volunteers to get together.

*Tanya:* Some clients are either emotionally or physically, because of time constraints, unable to meet with volunteers. But I have learned that even if there is only a few minutes for that volunteer group to meet with the people they are helping, that has a huge impact on how they perceive the work they are doing. We can tell them all day long how much we appreciate them being here, and how much we appreciate the time they are putting in and the skills they are bringing to the recovery of the community. But until they talk to someone in particular, it's kind of an abstract thought.

Those young people left there feeling that they had had a significant positive impact on people's lives.

*Tim:* Did you talk with that group before they went out to that farm?

*Tanya:* I met with them a little before we went out there, but I usually talk to a group several times before they even come here. The first time is when they contact us and ask if we still need help. Once they know we do, they start making plans. When their plans start to come together, then we talk again about what kind of work we have. As we get closer to the date of their arrival, we can give them more detail. But even then we can talk and plan for three months and when they arrive we'll find out the electrical inspector

didn't get there on schedule. We talk to them regularly before they come but we stress that they should expect the unexpected.

## **Best Practices:**

*\*Keep flexibility in mind when working with volunteers. Volunteers as well as the organization need to be flexible.*

*\*You will on occasion get some volunteer groups that are a little higher maintenance than others. They may need more direct supervision and are not easily left alone on a project.*

*\*Be patient with volunteers.*

## **Wadena-Otter Tail Story:**

*Tanya:* We stress to volunteers before they come that they have to be flexible. They need to be aware that even though we may have suggested to them what they may be doing when they arrive, things do happen. There can be weather problems, materials delays, or we can start a project and then discover that there are underlying issues that need to be dealt with before we can move forward. Volunteers need to be flexible and willing to change gears a little. We may end up having them do something different than they came to do. We try not to have that occur, but there is always the possibility that something will come up in the middle of a project, so we can't go forward as we planned.

*Tim:* Is each volunteer group somewhat different?

*Tanya:* You will occasionally get some volunteer groups that are a little higher maintenance than others. They may need more direct supervision and are not easily left alone on a project. They

may not have the experience or knowledge that other groups have. We get a lot of first time volunteer groups coming through. Some groups work slower. Others are quicker. The expectations you may set before a group arrives may not always be met because each group is different. We do have to talk to the client and tell them that these are volunteers and that we work with them on their time schedule. We try to do as much as we can under those circumstances. We have to understand that volunteers are not professionals and they are not getting paid. The organization, as well as the client, has to keep those things in mind. We all need to be patient.

Tanya: I usually fill in the group intake form when I make initial contact with a group. The pieces get filled in as we plan their visit. The individual intake and liability forms are forwarded ahead of time, and I collect those sometimes up front and sometimes upon their arrival. (See Group Intake form in Appendix G and Individual Volunteer Intake forms in Appendix E. Also see Volunteer Liability form in Appendix D and Volunteer Tracking form in Appendix F.)

### **Best Practices:**

*\*Some jobs aren't for volunteers.*

*\*Some volunteers aren't right for some projects.*

*\*Keep in touch with volunteers working on projects*

*\*Sometimes you have to tell volunteers we can't use you at this time.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail Story:**

Tanya: There are situations when a volunteer isn't always the best fit. Although volunteers may have had a lot of experience as volunteers, most

volunteers aren't professionals in a particular field. There are times when you need plumbing or electrical work and it needs to be done by a licensed professional, and not a volunteer. We have to know where to draw the line between what volunteers can and can't do.

Tim: You told me that even if a certain project can be done by volunteers, it may not be right for a particular volunteer group. Can you explain that?

Tanya: There are times when a volunteer, or group of volunteers, is not a good fit for a client or project. Since we want both the volunteer and client to have a positive experience, there are times when we can not, in good conscience, bring those two together. We have to try and eliminate tension before it happens. If a group's beliefs, or thoughts, are going to clash with a client, we want to keep them apart.

We had one client who was very set in his ways. He was very outspoken and he was not careful in the language he used. We had a group of youths with adult leaders and they were working with the client for about half a day. It soon became very obvious that it wasn't working out. They were clashing quite badly. We removed the volunteers from that situation and found something more appropriate for them to do.

Tim: Do you check in with volunteers to see how they are doing?

Tanya: During busy times we might have three or four groups out at the same time. You've got to stay in contact with leaders of groups. Check with them and ask them how their experience is going. Our construction manager often goes from project to project, so he can check with them. He can see if they have what they need and if there's anything we can do to make things go better.

*Tim:* Do you accept every volunteer group that wants to come and help?

*Tanya:* There will come a time when you will have to turn a volunteer group away. Sometimes you just can't accommodate a group's skills or time frame. That's ok! It is better to have them find another opportunity where their skills and their time frame are more suited to them. You don't want them to come and be disappointed. Wherever they go you want them to have a good experience and come back to volunteer again.

### **Best Practice:**

*\*Long-term recovery is a team effort.*

### **Wadena-Otter Tail Story:**

*Tanya:* The most important thing I do is work with our case manager, who works directly with our clients, and I work with our construction manager who oversees the projects. I'm kind of like the middle person. When Wendy, the case manager, has clients that have a need, she lets Ted (the construction manager) know. Ted lets me know what his volunteer needs are. I do my best to match volunteers with the project. I try to make sure that the volunteers that we have coming are the best fit for the projects we have. We're small enough here so that the three of us often sit down and coordinate these things together. We work well together. It's important that the people who are doing the long-term recovery can communicate well together and work as a team.



## Conclusion



The rapid and continual progress in overcoming unmet needs experienced by the Wadena – Otter Tail Long Term Recovery Committee has been the result of many forces, such as:

\*Leadership provided by members of the ministerial community has been stellar. Every step of the way these men and women have steadfastly held together and worked for the common good of all in need.

\*Politicians, who could easily have done otherwise, resisted every opportunity to politicize or interfere with our forthright mission: "Do good for those in need."

\*Volunteers from all over the Midwest have been tireless.

\*The Committee members themselves have likewise remained focused on our one purpose and mission.

\*Perhaps most importantly, God blessed us with the most wonderful, dedicated, and skilled staff.

The keys to success include:

Plan and organize early. Market your disaster every way you can. Do that marketing early and as often as you can. Engage and work through an experienced long-term recovery organization. Pray for guidance and commit to do good work for everyone who needs help.



# Appendix A



## RECEIPT AND WAIVER OF MECHANIC'S LIEN RIGHTS

Dated:

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_

CHECK ONLY ONE:

As partial payment for labor skill and material furnished.

As payment for all labor, skill and material furnished or to be furnished (except the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ retainage or holdback).

As full and final payment for all labor, skill and material furnished or to be furnished to the following described real property (legal description, street address, or project name):

and for value received hereby waives all rights acquired by the undersigned to file or record mechanic's liens against said real property for labor, skill or material furnished to said real property (only for the amount paid if Box 1 is checked, and except for retainage shown if Box 2 is checked). The undersigned affirms that all material furnished by the undersigned has been paid for and all subcontractors retained by the undersigned have been paid in full.

NOTE:

If this instrument is executed by a corporation, it must be signed by an officer, and if executed by a partnership, it must be signed by a partner.

By:\_\_\_\_\_

***THIS LIEN WAIVER IS NOT PERFECTED UNTIL CHECK CLEARS THE BANK.***



## Appendix B: Resource Links



LSS Disaster Recovery Services include long-term disaster case management, volunteer coordination, rebuild assistance, mental health supports, financial counseling, Camp Noah (for children impacted by disaster) and other related disaster recovery services. [www.lssmn.org/disaster/](http://www.lssmn.org/disaster/)

Initiative Foundation article on fund raising  
[www.iqmag.org/pages/11SU\\_D\\_Generosity](http://www.iqmag.org/pages/11SU_D_Generosity)

Red Cross booklet on personal short and long-term financial recovery  
[www.redcross.org/preparedness/FinRecovery/](http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/FinRecovery/)

A Guide for Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster  
Booklet available from the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD).  
NVOAD has other resources.  
[www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)

The website of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Contractor Consumer is full of useful information about hiring a contractor and how to avoid being scammed. It has a search tool to check on a contractor's license, a link to the state courts system to check on litigation against contractors, a Consumers Guide to Hiring a Residential Contractor, instructions on how to make a complaint against a contract, and a list of Quick Tips to help avoid being cheated.  
[www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/RBCCconsumer.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/RBCCconsumer.asp)

The Minnesota Council of Churches has ample opportunities for individuals and churches to volunteer, be of service, advocate for justice, and act faithfully. The Long Term Recovery Committee connected with volunteers through this Minneapolis based organization. You can reach them at 1-612-870-3622 or at  
[www.mnchurches.org/getinvolved/volunteer/Vol.html](http://www.mnchurches.org/getinvolved/volunteer/Vol.html)

Among other things, Lutheran Social Services is an excellent resource for volunteers. You can reach them at 1-800-582-5260 or at  
[www.lssmn.org](http://www.lssmn.org)

The Otto Bremer Foundation provided the long-term recovery committee with a substantial grant.  
[www.ottobremer.org](http://www.ottobremer.org)

## **Appendix C: Individuals involved in the interviews**

**Del Moen** is a Lutheran pastor and the chairman of the Wadena-Otter Tail Long Term Recovery Committee.

**David Evert** is a Wadena entrepreneur and businessman. He is a member of the Long Term Recovery Committee.

**Wendy Molstad** is the Committee's Case Manager.

**Tanya Nelson** is the volunteer coordinator for the Wadena-Otter Tail Long Term Recovery Committee. She is a staff person for the Committee.

**Diane Leaders** is the Family Services Director for Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council. She is also a member of the Long Term Recovery Committee.

**Scott McKellop** is Wadena County Emergency Coordinator. 218-639-4684 or 218-631-7795.  
Email: [scott.mckellop@co.wadena.mn.us](mailto:scott.mckellop@co.wadena.mn.us)

**Tim King** is a journalist and farmer from Long Prairie, Minnesota.

Thanks to John Moore, Disaster Recovery Coordinator of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and Charlie Durenberger, of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Construction Codes and Licensing Division's Enforcement Unit, for their assistance.



# Appendix D: Volunteer Liability Release Form



(Please read before signing, as this constitutes the agreement as a volunteer and the understanding of your working relationship with Wadena OtterTail Long Term Recovery Committee, WOLTRC.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge and state the following; I have chosen to travel to the work site to perform cleanup/construction work in disaster response.

I understand that this work entails a risk of physical injury and often involves hard physical labor, heavy lifting, and other strenuous activity; and that some activities may take place on ladders and buildings framing other than ground level. I certify that I am in good health and physically able to perform this type of work.

I understand that I am engaging in this project at my own risk. I understand that this is a "grass roots" activity to support individuals adversely affected by the disaster. I assume all risk and responsibility for any damage or injury to my property or any personal injury, which I may sustain while involved in this project.

In the event that WOLTRC arranges accommodations, I understand that they are not responsible nor liable for my personal effects and property and that they will not provide lock up or security for any items. I will hold them harmless in the event of theft resulting from any source or cause. I further understand that I am to abide by whatever rules and regulations may be in effect for the accommodations at the time.

By my signature, for myself, my estate and my heirs, I release, discharge, indemnify and forever hold WOLTRC, Lutheran Social Services and Lutheran Disaster Response, together with their officers, agents, servants, and employees, harmless from any and all causes of action arising from my participation in this project, and travel or lodging associated therewith, including any damages which may be caused by their own negligence.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last tetanus \_\_\_\_\_

Person to contact in case of emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_





# Appendix E: Volunteer Intake



Group Name/ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Database Assigned – Volunteer# \_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteer Intake

Please fill out form completely.

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Initial Last

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

Home Phone: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ work: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ cell: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Available Date/s \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_      Departure date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ (if known)

Need housing? Yes   No      From \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_    willing to pay for lodging  
 Provide your Own meals? Yes   No

volunteer liability form signed \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_       skills form returned \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Office working with them    WOLTRC          I am the team leader

How did you find out about this volunteer opportunity? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you affiliated with a Post-Secondary Educational Institute?    Yes    No

Are you a:    Student      Staff      Faculty Member

At which Institute or Campus? \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last tetanus shot \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Health issues: \_\_\_\_\_

Male    Female    youth under 19 years \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ birthdate    youth release signed

I am a member of Thrivent Financial For Lutherans

I am part of a Church group

If yes, denomination \_\_\_\_\_ Congregation/city \_\_\_\_\_

I speak this language \_\_\_\_\_ I will interpret Yes No

I have previous disaster experience (where) \_\_\_\_\_

To use your time and talents to the greatest benefit while you are volunteering, please indicate which of the following skills you have and also the level of skill you have using the following chart:

- 0 = I am unable to do or am not interested in this skill
- 1 = I don't know how but am willing to learn/try
- 2 = I have done it before but still need help to do
- 3 = I can do a good job by myself
- 4 = I can do a good job and can guide/teach others

<u>Skill Level</u>	<u>Skill</u>
_____	Architect
_____	Carpenter – finish
_____	Carpenter – rough
_____	Cleanup
_____	Concrete
_____	Construction Layout
_____	Contractor....I hold a license in the state of _____
_____	Drywall Hanger
_____	Drywall Finisher
_____	Egress Window
_____	Electrician.... I hold a license in the state of _____
_____	Engineer (kind) _____
_____	Flooring – Carpet _____ Flooring – Vinyl _____ Flooring - Wood
_____	Flooring – Ceramic tile
_____	Flooring – Underlay
_____	Framing
_____	General Labor/Cleanup/Debris Removal
_____	Heating/cooling
_____	Heavy equipment operator _____ CDL= yes no
_____	Insulation
_____	Masonry
_____	Painter
_____	Plumber....I hold a license in the state of _____
_____	Roofer
_____	Tree Removal _____ Chainsaw

Other Skills/Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Appendix F: Volunteer Tracking Log Sheet



Volunteer Log Sheet					Date: ___ / ___ / ___
	<b>Name (PRINT CLEARLY)</b>	<b>Time In</b>	<b>Time Out</b>	<b>Group ID if Applic.</b>	<b>Project Assigned to</b>
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					



# Appendix G: Group Volunteer Intake



## Volunteer Intake - Group

Please fill out form completely.

Initial Contact Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Initial Last

Group Name/ City \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ work: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Available Date/s \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Male ( \_\_\_\_ <18 \_\_\_\_ 18-65 \_\_\_\_ Retired)      Group Size \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Female ( \_\_\_\_ <18 \_\_\_\_ 18-65 \_\_\_\_ Retired)      \_\_\_\_ Youth release needed

Skills/Certifications/Experience  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Forms sent \_\_\_\_\_ Forms Received \_\_\_\_\_  
(Coverletter \_\_\_\_ Tools List \_\_\_\_ Intake/Skills \_\_\_\_ Release \_\_\_\_ Youth Release \_\_\_\_)

Confirmation Date \_\_\_\_\_ Team Leader \_\_\_\_\_  
Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

Needs;  
Lodging \_\_\_\_\_  
Meals \_\_\_\_\_  
Showers \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Orientation;  
Meet at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

Client ID/Project Assigned \_\_\_\_\_

(Individual Participant Intake Forms to Accompany)



# Appendix H: Client Intake Form



## Disaster Response

Client Intake Form

Disaster-affected individuals and families need to develop a plan of recovery so that the most basic life needs are met. These include safe housing, basic household items, and emotional, spiritual, legal and financial needs. In order to assist in this plan, a caseworker must verify assistance you have already received.

Date: _____	Case Worker: _____	Referred by _____
Disaster Name _____		
Disaster Site Office Location _____		

Head of Household \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_<sup>First</sup> Gender M F Soc Sec# \_\_\_\_\_<sup>Initial</sup> \_\_\_\_\_<sup>Last</sup>

Spouse name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Gender M F Soc Sec# \_\_\_\_\_

Disaster Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_

(if different) \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

FEMA# \_\_\_\_\_ Living in FEMA housing?  yes

rural area  urban  suburban

Family Members				
Complete Name	Gender	Date-Birth	SSN#	Relationship to client

\_\_\_\_ #Adult males \_\_\_\_ #Adult females \_\_\_\_ # children under 19 years of age  Interested in Camp Noah or other youth disaster camps

**Releases**

- FEMA
- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Unmet Needs
- Baptist
- Catholic
- CRWRC
- Interfaith
- Jewish
- LDR
- Presbyterian
- UCC
- UMCOR
- United Way
- CAN System
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic Background \_\_\_\_\_

Concerned about my pet's welfare \_\_\_\_\_

Church affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Member of  Thrivent Financial For Lutherans  Other fraternal organization \_\_\_\_\_

- Cleanup needed
- Construction assistance needed
- Volunteer help needed

**Vulnerable Populations**

- Active Military
- Veteran
- Clergy/Paid Church staff
- Disabled
- Elderly
- Low Income
- Single Parent
- Uninsured / Underinsured
- Medical Problems \_\_\_\_\_
- Migrant/Refugee
- Needs Interpreter for \_\_\_\_\_
- Non-U.S. Citizen (citizen of) \_\_\_\_\_
- Temporary/Permanent Resident Card \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial Information**

- Homeowner
- Rent
- Primary Residence

**EXPENSES:**

**INCOME**

Gross Monthly Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Child Support \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Investments \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-disaster income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Car Payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Child Support \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Cards \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Food/Clothing \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mortgage/Rent \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Medical \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Student Loan \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other (list) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Resources Received**

	<u>Date</u>		<u>Date</u>
FEMA Minimal Repair	\$ _____	SBA Loan	\$ _____
FEMA Furnace	\$ _____	Offered	\$ _____
FEMA Hot Water Heater	\$ _____	Accepted	\$ _____
FEMA Electrical Panel	\$ _____	I & H	\$ _____
FEMA Foundation	\$ _____		
FEMA Rental Assistance	\$ _____	Disaster Insurance	\$ _____

Personal Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

Disaster Assistance from FEMA received for previous disaster: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Date previous help was received \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Agencies Assistance

	<u>Help Received</u>	<u>Verification (date/initials)</u>
Red Cross	_____	_____
Salvation Army	_____	_____
Unmet Needs	_____	_____
Interfaith	_____	_____
LDR	_____	_____
UMCOR	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

*For office use only:*

#### Brief Case Scenario / Special Needs

Grid location assigned \_\_\_\_\_

URGENT

Assistance needed/given:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction assistance                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing assistance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling ___ # sessions ___ #participating | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donated product                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical assistance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food, clothing, personal care                | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household goods                              | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                |

Date Case Closed: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_



# Appendix I:



## Disaster Response Homeowner Release of Liability

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Daytime Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Night phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the owner and occupant of the above listed property. I give permission to volunteers from Lutheran Disaster Response/Wadena Long Term Recovery Committee to work on my property for the purpose of repairing my home due to the tornado of June 17, 2010. I understand that these are volunteers, not professionals working for profit, and that no warrant is made as to the quality of work done.

In consideration of the volunteer services to be rendered to me or on my property by the volunteers, I, the undersigned, release and agree to hold harmless the volunteers, Lutheran Disaster Response/Lutheran Social Services of MN, Wadena Long Term Recovery Committee and any related agency, from any liability, injury, damages, loss, accident, delay or irregularity related to the aforementioned volunteer services.

This release covers all rights and causes of action of every kind, nature, and description, which the undersigned ever had, now has, or but for this release, may have. This release binds the undersigned and his heirs, representatives, and assignees.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix J:



### *How to do Case Management*

The purpose of Case Management is to connect people to resources available to them. The task ahead is to identify those resources, advocate on the client's behalf, and requesting funding through the agency, unmet needs committees, and government programs.

#### The **DEFINITION** of Case Management:

- Case management is a method of providing services whereby the case manager assesses the needs of the client and develops a plan with the client to address those needs.
- Case management intervention occurs with both the client and resources. It may involve a wide range of agencies.
- A case manager encourages the client to control his/her own recovery.

#### The **Disaster-Caused Need**:

- The focus of a case manager during a disaster is **disaster-caused** needs. The purpose of assistance is to aid the client to return to a house that is safe and sanitary with only essential living space rebuilt.
- A disaster-caused need is NOT a pre-disaster condition such as deferred maintenance.
- A disaster-caused need is NOT an ongoing social issue.
- **A disaster-caused need IS a person, item, action, condition, or service affected or aggravated by the disaster.**

#### Establishing **Goals**:

- It will not be possible to return clients to exactly pre-disaster conditions. The goal of the case manager should include assisting clients in bridging the gap between what the clients are able to accomplish on their own and what is actually required to resume a normal life.
- List the tasks to be performed and establish priorities. Itemize the steps required to meet the goals and who is responsible for each task.
- Goals should be clear, realistic and measurable.
- Goals should be written - both the client and the case manager should have copies of them.
- It may be necessary to establish interim goals to facilitate the recovery. Examples of interim goals might be deadlines to collect required paperwork or deadlines to contact other agencies.



# Appendix K:



## Disaster Response Case Management Criteria

- The need must be disaster related and essential as defined below.
- The family will be assisted until the home is safe, sanitary and secure.

### Definitions:

- **Construction** – Cash or vouchers for building materials and paid labor
- **Family Assistance** – Anything other than construction
- **Essential Need** – 1 kitchen, 1 dining room, 1 living room, 1 bathroom (2 bathrooms is a special circumstance and must be staffed with LDR) and bedrooms that were occupied pre-disaster.

### Base Criteria:

### Points given\*

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • Existing resources must be exhausted first | + 2 |
| • Single Parent                              | + 2 |
| • Elderly (65+)                              | + 1 |
| • Low Income (Section VIII guidelines)       | + 1 |
| • Documented Disability                      | + 1 |
| • Documented Medical/Mental Health Needs     | + 1 |
| • Excessive Financial Obligations            | + 1 |
| • Basement                                   | + 1 |
| • Main Floor                                 | + 1 |

\* 1 Point = \$100 up to a cap of \$500 for family assistance  
\$1,000 for construction

\*\*Cases involving extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the caseworker and the supervisor to determine the dollar amount/services that will be offered to the client



## Appendix L: Early City Statistics



### **Law Enforcement:**

Officers from 46 agencies

### **Fire Department:**

38 outside fire departments

### **Tri County Hospital:**

Transported 16 patients

### **Damage Assessment:**

335 single and multi residences damaged

38 commercial buildings damaged

86 single and 8 multi residences destroyed

32 commercial buildings destroyed

### **Volunteers:**

2,931 registered volunteers

288 work orders were completed

### **Public Works & Utilities:**

1,800 + loads of trees removed from tornado

Issued 60+ demolition permits