

District 5190 Year in Review – 2021-2022

I. Wildfires

Little did I know, that even before I stepped into the role of District Governor I would be faced with the eruption of several large wildfires in our district. It began around the end of June 2021 with the igniting of the Tamarack Fire southwest of Markleeville in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. This fire crossed over into Nevada in several places burning all along Hwy 395. At the same time the Beckwourth Complex fire began in eastern California followed not even 10 days later by the Dixie and Dexter fires. Not even a month later the Caldor, River, Bennett and Bridge fires began. Before too long there were over 15 fires out of control in District 5190, causing major destruction and the loss of over 2500 homes, and 1.4 million acres.

As Rotarians, we knew we needed to assist those displaced by the fires. With the help of many Rotarians, and special noteworthy help from PDG Wyn Spiller and RC of Greenville President John Banks, we formed a District Disaster Relief Committee, and began requesting donations to support those evacuees. The committee worked tirelessly to structure policy, build an application process, and provide financial assistance to those affected by the fires. Gift cards were given to over 180 fire survivors who had lost their homes. Rotarians met with each recipient to support them emotionally as well as financially. This committee is now working with the Rotary clubs affected on ways to use the remaining funds to rebuild communities destroyed by the fires.

II. District Water Project

In early 2021 the district joined with the Rotary Club of Nevada City in an effort to formulate a clean water project in Los Barriles Mexico. The plan was to provide a water filtration kit for each ranchero in remote villages surrounding Los Barriles. Commitment of funds and volunteers from numerous clubs in our district were gathered and plans were

formulated to visit and install the kits beginning in February 2022. Unfortunately, COVID raised its ugly head and we discovered that the residents in the Los Barriles area who had already received kits the prior year, had abandoned the systems. It became apparent that the project was not sustainable, so the project was canceled, and funds returned to those clubs who had provided funding.

III. Coming out of COVID

a. Club Visits

Don and I visited all but 4 clubs in person. The remaining 4 were visited via Zoom. It was definitely the highlight of our governorship journey. We've made so many new life-long friends and we cherish this experience. I have always said that is what makes Rotary special...Fellowship!

b. Club Projects

In conjunction with the club visits, Rotarians shared many of their completed projects. Too many to list here but to share that all addressed humanitarian needs, the youth in our district, and those of international needs.

IV. District Community Fund

Under the leadership of PDG Berta Pickett this committee expanded this year to fill a very significant need in our district. With the formation of the District Disaster Relief Committee, the Community Fund was used to collect donations supporting the fire survivors and future projects in the affected areas. Monies were received from all over California, Nevada, and other districts in Zones 26 & 27.

Additionally, funds are donated to the Community Fund to support youth projects in our district and support those clubs that do not have a club foundation.

V. Club Fundraisers, Training Events & Gatherings

Don and I attended various club fundraisers, Foundation Area dinners, training events, as well as the district's annual Club Assembly. I am consistently amazed at the talent we have in our Rotarians and in their desire to share their knowledge to assist others. These trainings are so helpful to us all. I only wish that more members would partake the classes.

VI. District Conference "Voyage to Change Lives"

Another highlight of the year was the annual gathering of Rotarians at our conference. This year, finally.... after 2 long years without meeting in person.... we gathered at Harrah's in South Lake Tahoe. Chaired by DGN Dennis Geare, the conference began with a dinner cruise on Lake Tahoe shared with Rotarians from District 5180. Everyone really enjoyed the cruise.

The next morning began with a Polio Walk with 200+ participants, followed by a full day of guest speakers, including Adrienne Bankert, Dr Scott Kellerman, and our own RID Vicki Puliz. We enjoyed great food, beautiful decorations, club and special recognitions, great breakouts and youth music and speech competitions. Even "Little Toot" was there! We ended the day dancing to music by the Auburn Winds Orchestra and vocalist Kris Stepanian.

Sunday morning, we finished the conference announcing the major club awards, hearing the latest from Shelter Box CEO Kerry Murray, and passing the torch in the district governor line.

In all, it was a wonderful experience that we will never forget. Thank you to the entire district conference committee!

We're looking forward to more Rotary fun in the future!