



Agency salutes groups, individuals for aiding NWI flood recovery

LARRI honors people behind the scenes

By Lu Ann Franklin - Times Correspondent | Posted: Friday, April 23, 2010 12:05 am

MERRILLVILLE | An awards dinner placed 10 organizations and five people in the spotlight Thursday for their efforts in helping Northwest Indiana recover from the devastating floods in September 2008.

Lakeshore Area Regional Recovery of Indiana hosted the Champions of Hope Volunteer Dinner at the Hellenic Cultural Center, bringing together hundreds of people who gave their time and energy to restoring and rebuilding homes damaged by floodwaters.

Ike Randolph, executive director of the Governor's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives, saluted the LARRI organization for its work on behalf of flood victims in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. LARRI formed shortly after floodwaters had receded.

"LARRI is a model for other places and groups," Randolph said. "People of faith have been involved here since the beginning. This shows the resilience of Hoosiers."

Ten groups were recognized for their contribution to the regionwide recovery.

* The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee provided volunteer teams from the U.S. and Canada to help clean and rebuild. Teams with the group also entered data on flood victims into computer systems.

* Faith Without Borders from St. John the Evangelist Church in St. John worked almost every weekend until the "muck and gut" procedure was absorbed into the construction process.

* College students with Habitat for Humanity at University of Chicago provided support almost on a weekly basis.

* AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps will soon send its sixth team to Northwest Indiana to help with construction projects.

* Crown Point United Methodist Church has provided weekly meals for AmeriCorps teams and also has provided housing for volunteers.

* Lutheran Church Charities has donated furniture for the volunteer housing locations and provided mission team support and recruitment.

* The Goshen Mennonite Disaster Services Team joined efforts in March 2009.

* The Nappanee Amish Team sends a team of skilled volunteers each week to help with LARRI rebuilding projects.

* One Brick's Chicago chapter members have been volunteering every weekend since the beginning of the flood.

* Brethren Disaster Ministries was the first to work on a consistent basis to get people back in their homes.

LARRI also praised several individuals for their efforts.

* John Beebe, of Highland, assessed homes for damage and wrote reports that helped LARRI get assistance to those who needed it. He also serves on the LARRI steering committee and construction committee.

* Dan Cacich, of Munster, experienced the flood firsthand and volunteered to become a part of establishing LARRI. He has

served on the steering committee and unmet needs subcommittee.

* Marion Case, of Munster, has served on the construction subcommittee since LARRI's beginning.

* Doreen DiCianni, of Dyer, has volunteered on a weekly basis since the flood as a recovery specialist and assistant and phone blitz caller.

* Ed Mulder, of Munster, volunteered with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee to make LARRI work sites a national effort. He also serves on the LARRI steering committee and the unmet needs subcommittee.