

*Below is the original message from Putnam County that spurred Clifford Swoape, Middle Tennessee Natural Gas Utility District, into making requests for his company to offer additional assistance when he saw that EOC was still in need of basic necessities. Clifford asked for permission to collect donations at MTNG's non-affected offices, assemble volunteers to assist in clean-up efforts over the weekend, and activate the MTGDA Emergency Response Trailer affectionately nicknamed The NatMobile. Communications that were sent throughout the course of the Deployment are catalogued hereafter in the hopes of educating for better response in future events. Historian, Clifford Swoape, will add his thoughts and extra information in italics in appropriate sections.*

**From Hannah E. Davis [hedavis@crmchealth.org](mailto:hedavis@crmchealth.org)  
Tue 2/24/2015 2:58 PM**

We will continue to bring updates to the Facebook page **Putnam County Emergency Management Agency** and the Putnam County 911 website [www.putnam911.org](http://www.putnam911.org).

#### EOC MEDIA MESSAGE UPDATE

(2/24/15 at 2:30 p.m.)

The Emergency Operations Center continues to operate in Monterey.

Main roads are cleared and crews continue to work on clearing secondary roads. The goal at this time is to get roads cleared white line to white line.

Water systems are functioning at this time, including sewer and pump stations.

VEC is working on installing new poles on Highway [84 and Hanging Limb Road](#). Crews continue to work on other areas identifying those that have service-line issues.

Welfare checks are being done in areas outside and inside the city limits of Monterey as responders are able to get to the different areas. Citizens needing assistance should call [931-646-4357](tel:931-646-4357).

Shelters will remain open in Cookeville and Monterey as long as they are needed. A shower trailer from the Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief is en route to the Monterey shelter.

Reminder for Cumberland Cove residents: Supplies are available at the Welcome Center.

A temporary animal shelter has been established for domestic, home animals at [315 E. Peter Ave. in Monterey](#). If the pet has a crate, please bring it with the pet. If you have other animals that need shelter, please call the help line at [931-646-4357](tel:931-646-4357).

If you are in the affected areas, please check on your neighbors. If you have family in the affected areas and you have not heard from them, please call [931-646-4357](tel:931-646-4357) to have someone go to check on them.

Tetanus shots are available at Monterey First Baptist.

Red Cross will be out doing electrical needs assessments for homes in the Monterey area.

Please be sure to place collected debris at the roadside for pick up. Pick up will be scheduled at a later date.

The speed limit in Monterey on Highway 84 is changing to 25 mph.

Donations are currently being accepted to help residents in the area. The Disaster Distribution Center located at Monterey Pallet at 203 S. Chestnut in Monterey is now open and receiving donations or call [839-8549](tel:839-8549).

Items needed are:

- Pop-top canned food
- Sugar-free foods
- Paper products
- Baby food
- Garbage bags
- New blankets
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Toiletries
- Socks
- Toboggans
- Small gas cans
- Baby wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Pop Tarts
- Peanut butter crackers
- Juice boxes
- Adult and baby diapers

Please do not donate candles as they are a safety hazard.

A disaster relief fund has been set up for those wishing to make a monetary donation. The Bank of Putnam County has set up an account called the “Monterey Disaster Relief Fund”. To make a donation, please contact them at [931-528-5441](tel:931-528-5441) or [931-839-2211](tel:931-839-2211).

If you need more information please send your email to [putnampio@gmail.com](mailto:putnampio@gmail.com).

Thank you.

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*Author’s Note: without this e-mail communication, the ONLY one that MTNG received during the entire disaster response effort despite being active members of the Putnam County LEPC, **NO additional action would have ever been taken.** This drove home the true level of the need. While Emergency Agencies have improved communications with each other, Utilities and other “fringe” emergency response agencies still find themselves outside of the immediate communication loop, especially when Police, fire, and others have all they can handle in the actual response. Need communication to ALL,*

*perhaps consider partnering with neighboring counties or with agencies that can help coordinate communication better (less directly involved in actual response).*

*MTNG note: I spent the better part of Tuesday getting permissions and forming the framework of the response from various levels in the company. Had to have blessings of CEO, Attorney/HR and VP of Ops. While every disaster will be unique and will require such framing as it goes, having a basic version set-up in advance would expedite the process. We need to know what we can and cannot do: Questions that came up were:*

- *Can MTNG do this as we are charged by the state of TN to supply natural gas and this could be viewed as technically beyond that charge (over-stepping our mission / outside of our pervue)?*
- *Can they drive their company trucks to volunteer?*
  - *Attorney: NO, need to drive personal vehicles as it is not directly gas related.*
  - *VP Ops: YES, they may encounter a gas Emergency while working and would need their tools. It is still on our system.*
  - *REALITY: told MTNG personnel they could drive their vehicles, but all service technicians drove their personal vehicles anyway because they were larger trucks that could haul the four wheelers and additional equipment that they needed, as well as allowing some of them to bring NON MTNG volunteers with them. Only company vehicles involved were management personnel vehicles.*
- *Can we do this without interfering with normal operations?*
  - *REALITY: NO, but we tried every way possible. Donation time was limited to a narrow window, and volunteer work was scheduled on Saturday, with orders that MTNG work came first. As such, on-call personnel and installing crews scheduled to work could not come to assist. Donations accepted in the office did require the assistance of at least one person in each office to take charge of sorting, boxing and cataloging them as they came in, as well as coordinating pick-up.*
- *Can we take cash donations or checks? Nanticipated problem as we had requested specific items off of the list sent by EOC. However, many folks wanted to simply give money. What we did: asked each Office Manager to take charge of Money and log as it came into office. Checks were NOT to be written to MTNG, as this causes many audit problems. Was provided instead with community accounts set up in affected areas (Monterey Disaster Relief Fund and Cumberland County VOAD Disaster Relief Fund). Only had one initially and it was in EOC e-mail. This info DEFINITELY needs to be distributed. All checks were written to them. Cash was divided among three counties and receipts collected throughout to establish chain of custody in case questions were later raised.*

### **Message sent to MTGDA on Wed 2/25/2015 11:03 AM**

**Subject:** Cumberland Plateau & the NatMobile

The counties of Cumberland, Putnam and White were especially hard hit by the ice storm this past weekend and their EOCs have put out calls for assistance. Middle Tennessee Natural Gas is organizing some efforts to assist in those counties in addition to the work we are doing on the gas side of things. I have offered the use of the MTGDA trailer to the Emergency Management folks in those counties and we are waiting to see if it can be useful. If it is something that can be worked into the efforts effectively, I will need to activate the emergency portion for the trailer for its inaugural event. As such, we do not yet have a formal process, so this request is going out to everyone. Here is what I will need if we decide to use it:

- A 250 or bigger truck to pick up, deliver, and take back the trailer when it is finished, with a driver for both trips. Truck can be left, but can also drop and return if that works better.
- Will need at least two volunteers to cook and staff the trailer for each day it is there.

- Will need to be able to meet those volunteers to purchase necessary items.
- Cleanup the trailer crew after all is said and done

MTNG is coordinating a volunteer effort to take folks to affected areas this Saturday to help with clearing, etc. Our offices are also collecting donations to get to the agencies requesting assistance, which we will deliver.

I realize I am asking for potential volunteers without a clear plan; but we are making this up as we go, so that is the best we can do. Please let me know if you can/wish to assist, and what the parameters of that assistance would look like.

I will give more details as they become available, just wanted to gauge how much I could reasonably offer.

Thanks,

Cliff Swoape

Middle Tennessee Natural Gas

**Message sent Wednesday, 02-25-2015 at 12:48 pm:**

**Putnam County has contacted me about the Trailer and has a request if the trailer could be used for the following:**

- **The school system has been closed for some time and many of their students only get meals at school.**
- **There are too many federal regulations to make feeding them from the school kitchens practical**
- **150-200 families per day might take advantage of this**
- **2 meals a day desired: lunch & supper**
- **MTGDA or a sponsor would have to cover the cost of the food**
- **Putnam County Schools (Nutritionist Charlotte Perry vows) could provide labor to prepare, and serve food with proper nutrition guidelines and proper care of the trailer.**
- **Staff would be available and there would be a need as long as schools remained closed.**
- **They would take care of the kitchen and keep it clean.**
- **They would staff it each day including weekends and they would be paid by the school system and welcome the chance to work (as they are currently two weeks without pay).**
- **15% of the County (500 or more homes) is still without power.**

**What is the will of the Association????**

**Update Sent Thu 2/26/2015 5:23 PM**

Inaugural emergency use of the MTGDA trailer is underway. Trailer is set up in Monterey on Commercial Avenue near Parks and Recreations Office. nutrition staff from the Putnam County school system will be manning the booth for us. They were amazed by the kitchen. Lebanon delivered the trailer with a natural gas powered truck. Atmos Energy bought the first thousand dollars worth of food to get them started. Kenny Hay actually drove up, worked with the staff to buy and deliver the food. They have

activated the calling system to let all parents know there is food for the kids. No one who wants food regardless of age will be turned away. Donations are coming in from other systems. I am humbled and impressed I at the same time. More details and pictures will be forthcoming but here are a couple just to let you know.



#### **Update Sent Fri 2/27/2015 10:01 AM**

The Middle Tennessee Gas Distributors Association (MTGDA) Emergency Response Trailer, affectionately known as the NatMobile, was christened into emergency response use at the end of February 2015 in Monterey, Tennessee following the massive ice storms that struck the Cumberland Plateau.

Putnam County School Systems, through the Putnam County Emergency Operations Center and contact with local Natural Gas supplier, Middle Tennessee Natural Gas Utility District, requested the use of the MTGDA Food Trailer to assist with feeding children in the community. It was explained to our Association that a significant portion of the children in the area hit hard by the ice storm were on free and reduced lunches, and that schools had been closed for going on two weeks. The fear was that parents had likely exhausted what supplies they had at their homes and that they were likely going hungry at this point. The School System further explained that governmental red tape and regulations made it all but impossible for them to serve out of the school facilities. So, the School System could staff the operation, but would need a kitchen and food to prepare; that, they said, would make the NatMobile a blessing indeed. The Association responded with a yes so resounding it brought tears to eyes.

Approval for activation was quickly granted, as a “no brainer.” Several members immediately offered to send donations. Atmos Energy sent Kenny Hay to Sam’s Club in Cookeville and \$1,000 worth of food was purchased by the “shoppers” from Putnam County Schools who met him there. Food was delivered to Monterey High School for staging. Lebanon Gas Department arranged to have the trailer delivered by Jimbo Blair and Darrell Jones in a brand new CNG fueled truck which climbed right up the mountain with that heavy trailer in tow and “never missed a beat.”

The trailer set up at **705 Commercial Avenue in Monterey**, near the City Parks and Receptions Office, directly in front of the Tennis Courts; in an easily accessible and highly visible location for the public.

Lebanon and Middle Tennessee Natural Gas employees lit the pilots and fired the burners. They then handed it over to the Nutrition staff from the Putnam County School System who set up the trailer and inventoried the food. They were amazed by the kitchen, and sent their compliments to the Association, and particularly Dale Collins of Atmos who designed it. Putnam County Schools used their school notification system to begin spreading the word to their students. All agreed, that while the project was for the kids, no one who was hungry would be turned away, and the Natural Gas companies of Middle Tennessee would keep the food coming. It was pledged that food would be served **seven days a week** until it was no longer needed.

At 10:14 pm on Thursday, February 26, Putnam County Emergency Management Agency posted the following to their Facebook Page:

A food trailer has been donated. It will be set up at 705 Commercial Avenue at the Community Center near the tennis courts.

The Putnam County School System Nutrition Department will be staffing the food trailer starting Friday, February 26.

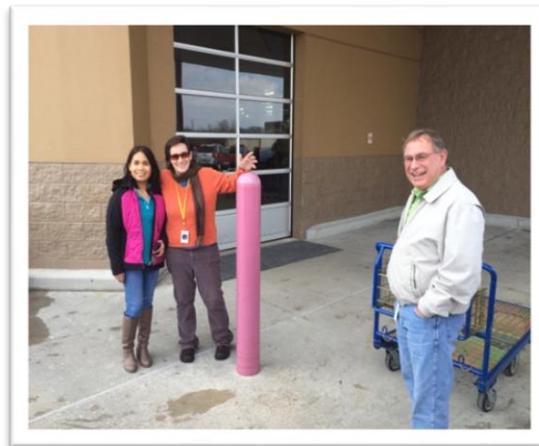
There will be three hot meals served daily.

The schedule is:

**Breakfast 7:30-9:00**

**Lunch 12:00-1:30 and**

**Dinner 5:30-7:00**



Atmos Energy's Kenny Hay met two volunteers from Putnam County School System's Nutrition Staff to purchase the first \$1,000 worth of food to be served – Sam's Club, Cookeville, TN



Atmos Energy's Kenny Hay poses with Charlotte Perry before unloading the first truckload of food purchased with \$1,000 donated by Atmos. Supplies were unloaded at Monterey High School until the trailer arrived.



Putnam County Schools' Nutrition Director Charlotte Perry with City of Lebanon Gas Department's Darrell Jones and Jimbo Blair who delivered and helped set-up the Trailer



NatMobile Trailer set up and ready to serve 02-26-2015

### Update Sent 03-02-2015

Friday, February 27, 2015: With cooking being done by Putnam County Schools Nutrition Staff, First day of Emergency Operations for MTGDA NatMobile served 600 meals in Monterey, Tennessee.

Saturday, February 28, 2015, through 4 pm last update:

- Around 11:00 am, Cliff Swoape notified by phone of problem with water tanks on Trailer. He approved Putnam Co. EMA to repair as needed and bill MTGDA if necessary. Problem was in drains, still not completely known what happened, but it was repaired.
- Putnam Nutrition Staff reports 200 meals served at Breakfast and 500 meals served at lunch.

Attached are some pictures that help tell the story, including a post by the Putnam County EMA on their Facebook page, as well as a picture of the sign about the Trailer on the front door of the Emergency Supply Distribution Point in Monterey.

Putnam County Schools are back in session today and the booth is being staffed by volunteers in the community to keep it operational while there is still need.

Perdue Chicken donated 200 pounds of chicken to be served.

The emergency food distribution point has authorized the trailer to get any supplies that they have and the trailer needs to keep doing the work they are doing.

Cliff Swoape has offered to purchase more food, but according to Charlotte Perry of Putnam County, food keeps being donated and they need to use up the stores that they have first.

More to come....God bless you for believing in this vision and making it possible. Our Association has fed those in need in Middle Tennessee. ***Natural Gas...Warms your Heart, too!***



Putnam County School System's Nutrition Staff at work cooking breakfast on Day 2 of Operations (February 28, 2015)



Facebook Post from Putnam County Emergency Management Agency



Trailer Day 2 – Saturday morning, 2-28-2015:

Note trailers in the background: Picked up some friends from God and the Fire Department. It is good to have great friends!



Signs that were posted on trailer and on the front door at Monterey Pallet Company, serving as food and supply distribution warehouse