



LASSEN COUNTY

Health and Social Services Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

☒ **HSS Administration**

☐ **Public Guardian**
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Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8128

☐ **Grant and Loans Division**
1400 Chestnut Street, Ste. C
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8309

☐ **Behavioral Health**
555 Hospital Lane
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8108/8112

Brashear Annex
700 Brashear Street
Susanville, CA 96130
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☐ **Patients' Rights Advocate**
336 Alexander Avenue
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8322

☐ **Public Health**
1445 Paul Bunyan Road
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8183

☐ **Environmental Health**
1445 Paul Bunyan Road
Susanville, CA 96130
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☐ **Community Social Services**
1400 Chestnut Street, Ste A
Susanville, CA 96130

**LassenWORKS
Business & Career Network**
PO Box 1359
1616 Chestnut Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8152

Child & Family Services
1600 Chestnut Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8277

Adult Services
PO Box 429
1400 Chestnut Street, Ste B
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8158

☐ **HSS Fiscal**
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(530) 251-2614

DATE: 8/18/2021

TIME: 12:00 PM

RELEASE #: 4 of 4

SUBJECT: Dixie Fire and Emergency Shelter Status Update

Lassen County would like to commend our citizens for their resolve, comradery, and genuine compassion shared in the last 36 days since the start of the Dixie Fire. We would like to recognize the emergency service workers fighting to keep our community safe and the agencies and individuals volunteering to provide support to the evacuees. During times of adversity, it is important to remember we need to stick together and decide to put collaboration first.

County Personnel have been working behind the scenes to secure the necessary resources required to house and support evacuees from all counties affected by the Dixie Fire. On July 23, 2021, an emergency shelter was opened at the Lassen Community College in response to a request by Plumas County to provide mutual aid. Lassen County readily assisted in the evacuation and welcomed those in need into our community. We are proud of the services we have provided the residents in conjunction with long standing community partners. Since opening, the Lassen County shelter has provided safe refuge to over 200 Plumas County Evacuees.

On August 5, 2021, Lassen County opened a second shelter at Lassen High School to accommodate the new evacuation orders issued for Plumas County. Mandatory orders were issued later that evening for Clear Creek, Westwood, and Pinetown marking the first evacuation orders for Lassen County residents.

As the fire in areas of Plumas County calmed and moved into Lassen County, county officials worked to shift residents back to their county of origin. Unfortunately, on Friday, August 13, 2021, the attempt to repopulate Plumas residents back into Chester and West Almanor failed due to increased fire activity. In response, the two counties worked for the next several days to secure additional spaces to setup shelters in their counties. In preparation of the school year starting, the shelter located at the Lassen High School was closed on August 14, 2021 and residents were relocated to Lassen Community College.

This week, Lassen County faced increased fire activity and evacuations as the fire moved into the Antelope Lake Area. The increased winds resulted in fire activity that could not have been predicted and at a speed that was hard to anticipate. On August 16, 2021, Mandatory orders were issued for parts of Janesville grade. At this point, Lassen County officials reached out to Plumas County for assistance and support to prepare for the immediate threat posed

to Janesville and Susanville. Plumas County arranged for buses to come to Lassen County and assist in the transition of Plumas County residents from Lassen Community College to a shelter further away from the evacuation orders.

Prior to the arrival of the buses, Lassen County staff attempted to assist in the notification of the transition of Plumas County residents to the Plumas County shelter in Portola. The fire continued to grow and the situation in Lassen County intensified as those residents boarded the buses. In the end, they were turned around when the fire crossed Highway 395.

We would like to acknowledge the situation that occurred at the shelter that night and acknowledge that better preparation, planning, and communication by both Plumas and Lassen County representatives could have taken place. While making decisions in the face of an emergency is never easy, it has and will continue to be our priority to communicate and collaborate with stakeholders and those who will be affected moving forward. Lassen County officials will conduct a comprehensive investigation to gather the facts of what occurred that night and act accordingly to improve our process in the future.

We would like to reiterate, ALL evacuees from the Dixie Fire are welcome at the Lassen County shelters regardless of the county you come from.

CalFire Public Information Officers provided a Dixie Fire briefing at the Lassen Community College shelter on August 17, 2021, offering an informational update and a forum for individuals to ask questions.

Today, Lassen County is opening a medical center for evacuees in need of medical care. The medical center is staffed with physicians and nurses who are available to evaluate the health of evacuees in need of care and triage to additional services as needed.

As the fire spreads, evacuees who would like to move out of the path of future evacuation zones may travel to the evacuation shelter listed below. Contact the shelter and the county may assist with transportation.

Lassen Community College
478-200 CA-139, Susanville, CA
Emergency Shelter Line (530) 250-9004

Washoe County Red Cross Shelter Pending

Additional resources will be made available if the need arises, including other shelter locations. Everyone should be prepared to evacuate. Fire behavior is unpredictable and we simply don't know how it will progress. If you feel anxious or threatened, leaving early is always your choice. You don't need to wait for a warning or an order. We are monitoring conditions carefully and we're in constant communication with fire personnel and all our cooperating agencies. For information on how to prepare for an evacuation, go to www.readyforwildfire.org.