

# Randolph County Forges Ahead with Disaster Recovery Committee

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**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** – Randolph County is a sparsely populated area with a little more than 17,000 people living within its 656 square miles. But after the severe storms between April 26 and May 19, residents and officials adopted a proactive stance toward disaster recovery.

County officials and residents received help from the State and FEMA during formation of the Randolph County Recovery Committee (RCRC). The committee is formed according to a model developed by the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD).

The committee is able to combine the resources of the diverse organizations represented on it and find solutions for individuals needing services beyond the disaster assistance FEMA or the state provides.

Kevin Barnett, RCRC chair and pastor of the Sutton Free Will Baptist Church in Pocahontas, Ark., said community residents have seen three floods in the past 9 years, “so the reality of another disaster of some kind is very real.”

He said the group had never heard of a long term recovery group of any kind, so the VOAD representatives (State and FEMA voluntary agency liaisons) were helpful in explaining how such a group worked.

“Our main influence in forming was that the group has a desire to help people and realized that even after the news media is gone and the first wave of volunteers are gone, there is still work to be done in order for people to be back to some sort of normal lifestyle,” Barnett said.

The national organization is a coalition representing dozens of the most reputable nongovernmental organizations. There are 55 state and territorial VOADs with extensive disaster experience. The coalition developed principles and standards and developed an extensive nuts-and-bolts guide for recovery group formation.



The guide is free and available to the public at [nvoad.org](http://nvoad.org).

Susan Love, State Voluntary Agency Liaison with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, supports the Arkansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. “ARVOAD members have been instrumental in supporting the formation of the RCRC and they continue to support in critical areas such as disaster case management,” she said.

Voluntary organizations are present in communities before federal/state assistance arrives and are there long after the first responders go home. Still, disasters leave long-lasting impacts on individuals, many for whom federal and state disaster assistance is not enough. Groups such as the Randolph County Recovery Committee Recovery may provide a solution.

For updates on the Arkansas response and recovery, follow the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (@AR\_Emergencies) on Twitter and Facebook and [adem.arkansas.gov](http://adem.arkansas.gov). Additional information is available at [fema.gov/disaster/4318](http://fema.gov/disaster/4318).

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