

Guanajuato sends aid to Mexico City

By Kernan Turner

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Guanajuato Mayor Edgar Castro Cerrillo (in red and white checkered shirt) and Gov. Miguel Marquez-Marquez (fifth from the left) join in a minute of silence led by the mayor and governor in memory of the dead and injured in Mexico earthquake. [Guanajuato government photo]



A Guanajuato rescue brigade prepares Tuesday night to head for Mexico City where a deadly earthquake killed more than 200 people and buried children under a school building flattened by the quake. Two special K-9 search dogs accompanied them. [Guanajuato government photo]

Volunteers rushed overnight from Guanajuato to help rescue efforts in Mexico City, struck by a deadly earthquake on Tuesday.

Residents reported feeling the ground shake in Guanajuato, Ashland's sister city, but no property damage or injuries were reported. Guanajuato is some 220 miles northwest of Mexico City.

The government said on its Facebook page that a rescue brigade consisting of six Civil Protection members and seven K-9 police brigade members with two specialized dogs traveled overnight in a caravan from Guanajuato to Mexico City, more than four hours away. One of the rescue dogs helped locate a person on Wednesday who was buried alive in the debris of a textile factory toppled by the quake.

Mayor Edgar Castro Cerrillo confirmed Tuesday evening that Guanajuato, the capital of the State of Guanajuato, was not affected by the earthquake. “There are no injuries or damages as a consequence of the ground movement registered at midday in Mexico City,” he said.

Castro Cerrillo urged national unity in the face of disaster. “Together we can reconstruct, together we can help one another.”

The mayor and Guanajuato State Gov. Miguel Marquez-Marquez joined others at City Hall Wednesday for a minute of silence in memory of the earthquake victims in Mexico City, Puebla, Morelos and the State of Mexico. The governor was in town to watch construction of a new soccer field.

The city began collecting donations for the homeless in the earthquake zone, ranging from bottled water and canned foodstuffs to personal hygiene and house-cleaning items. The Guanajuato volunteer fire department also called for donations, especially clothes and blankets for “our brothers who today most need our help.”

“It’s a sad day,” University of Guanajuato Professor Erika Gonzalez wrote Wednesday on her Facebook page. “The City of Mexico, where I was born and where my family is injured and suffering — my prayers are for those who are trapped in the debris ... Solidarity is the only way we will go forward.” Gonzalez, coordinator of the Masters in Management Program at the university, is well known in Ashland. She was an exchange student at Southern Oregon University and has visited Ashland several times since then.

Dr. Leticia Chacon of the University of Guanajuato posted a manual on her Facebook page that she recommended to psychology colleagues who want to volunteer as first-responders to earthquake victims. Chacon spent two years as a visiting professor at SOU and has returned several times with psychology exchange students.

—Amigo Club’s Entre Amigos (Between Friends) column about Ashland ties to its sister city Guanajuato, Mexico, usually appears on the third Tuesday of each month. Longtime AP reporter and bureau chief Kernan Turner is an Ashland resident and Amigo Club member.