



April 23, 2013

For Immediate Release

San Diego Regional Fire Foundation Sets Up Fund to Support Families of First Responders Who Perished in the West, Texas Fertilizer Plant Explosion

Eleven first responders, including volunteer fire fighters and emergency medical workers among the 14 people who perished in fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas.

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San Diego, CA – The San Diego Regional Fire Foundation, a tax deductible 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing grants for equipment and training to firefighters in San Diego County, has created an opportunity for all San Diegans to support the families of the West, Texas fallen heroes who died serving their community. Though overshadowed by the explosions and the subsequent events in Boston, the fire and resulting explosion at the fertilizer plant in West, Texas on Wednesday, April 17 resulted in more deaths, injuries and property damage than in Boston.

The impact to the small, 2,800 resident town of West, which is located between Dallas and Waco in Central Texas, is devastating given that there were 14 deaths, 11 of which were first responders. Additionally 11 other firefighters are still hospitalized and over \$1 million in fire apparatus was lost in the explosion. First responders initially rushed to the site of a fire at the fertilizer plant and were then caught in a huge explosion as the flames reached a storage tank containing highly volatile ammonium nitrate used in making fertilizer. The explosion, which also injured 200 people, destroyed over 20% of this small rural community.

Joan Jones, Executive Director of the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation, stated, “We are deeply connected to all volunteer firefighters and first responders throughout the nation, and we’re greatly saddened by this tragedy. We recognize the courage and commitment to the community that put these first responders in harm’s way and grieve for their loss. Our prayers are with the families and the entire community of West, Texas. The Fire Foundation Board members are donating \$2,500 to the West, Texas fire department to assist the families of those killed in the explosion. We are asking all San Diegans to please join us so that we can pool our giving to help these people who have suffered this devastating loss. Individuals interested in supporting the families of the fallen first responders can make donations by

direct mail to the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation at 2508 Historic Decatur Rd., Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92106-6138; online at www.sdfirefoundation.org, or at any branch of California Coast Credit Union, referencing the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation – West, Texas Fund. 100% of your donation will go to West, Texas.”

For 24 years, the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation has been providing grants for equipment and training to fire stations with volunteer firefighters in San Diego County. These departments protect over 60% of San Diego County and respond to 6,000 emergency incidents each year.

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For additional information on the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation, please visit www.sdfirefoundation.org or call 619.814.1352.

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