

I wanted to take a minute to thank the entire region for their support, kindness and understanding as we go through the Ute Park Fire. The generosity and caring shown has been beyond anything one could hope for. While I don't want to minimize any offers of supplies and volunteers, I do want to bring you this message.

As we go forward through the following days, weeks, months and years of recovery from this fire, and as we prepare for the next event life brings us, please try to keep following through with this kindness and compassion. Many of the firefighters, first responders and support people involved have donated their time and talents to the cause for a very long time. In the periods between emergencies, we train, practice, and prepare for just this kind of event. It's in these calm times when so many volunteer organizations struggle to find the warm bodies that help keep the operations afloat while we wait and pray that the next big one doesn't come. I know many of us are very busy in our lives with work, family and other commitments. Again, I am not trying to minimize your current support; it is so very much appreciated. But if anyone truly wants to help, then I strongly urge you to find those opportunities around you and get involved. Our volunteer fire departments, ambulance services and other civic organizations are constantly looking for new membership. National organizations like the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and many others like them, would love to set up shop in places like Cimarron, Springer, Maxwell, Eagle Nest, Raton and Angel Fire. Our existing Civic Clubs could also pursue their own disaster assistance teams. Any of these ideas I would gladly support and offer as much of my time as I could spare to get them up and running. Even if you cannot offer the time requirements for any of these volunteer activities, many organizations like our Fire Depts. have auxiliary membership with less strenuous physical and time requirements. Finally, if nothing else, find a way to support all our local volunteers during the quiet months by offering funding, supplies, use of facilities and any other means you can think of that would help to benefit their mission to serve our community.

Again, thank you all for your love and support through this fire. Currently I'm a little busy, but in the following weeks, please feel free to contact me at "[tvigil@co.colfax.nm.us](mailto:tvigil@co.colfax.nm.us)" if you want any help in finding a way to begin volunteering.

Sincerely

Thomas Vigil

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Vigil". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Colfax County Emergency Manager

PS- While this letter is geared towards Colfax County NM in particular. To those in other parts of the state and country, these same issues are faced by all volunteer first responder and disaster assistance organizations. There is something available to you locally. Get involved.