

Santa's 'Convoy of Toys' Bring Happiness to Bastrop, Texas

Santa arrives in Bastrop, Texas bringing toys to the Children affected by Recent Wildfires

Saturday, September 24, 2011 - It started a week or so before when **Lone Star Santas** from all over Texas started asking for donations of New Toys for their '**Convoy of Toys**'. In addition to local churches; Santa Jim Fletcher's dentist's office in Houston (Dr. Landry) started a very successful toy drive; a machine shop in Euless (HMDunn) where Santa Mike Grime's works collected toys and dollars. One of the churches (Metropolitan Baptist) in Houston wrote member Santa Glenn Westberry a check for \$1000 which he and his Mrs. Claus (Sara) went to Toys R Us and purchased \$1500 worth of toys at a 2 for 1 sale ... just to mention a few.



On Thursday, 9/22/11, Boy Scout Troup #901 from Cypress, Texas arrived at Santa Jim Fletcher's house to help Santas and Mrs. Claus sort, bag, and load toys into an 18' covered trailer borrowed from a neighbor. Banners supplied by **FASTSIGNS-CHAMPIONS** in Houston were attached to the trailer.

Early Saturday morning, several of the Santas and Mrs. Claus met at Santa Jim's where we formed the Convoy. The **Harris County Sherriff's Office** supplied the '**Convoy of Toys**' with an escort to the edge of Harris County, where other county Sherriff's departments escorted us all the way to Bastrop. Santa Jeff Moreland coordinated all the escort arrangements.



When we arrived at **Mina Elementary** school in Bastrop, we were met by **P.A.L.S.**, a very fine group of High School students. We made them all Santa's Elves! They unloaded the trailer and helped us display the toys on cafeteria tables.



At last, the families started arriving. Many were covered with soot from sifting through whatever they had left of their homes. The children selected their 'special' toy or toys. We found that they tended to migrate toward the stuffed toys. Children have special concerns and fears when they experience a disaster. Their

emotions are different from their parents. We think the stuffed toys gave them something to snuggle up tokind of like a security blanket!

Santa Jim brought his 100 year old Santa Throne. After selecting their toys, they visited with Santa. They were all given lots of Love, Hope, and Joy + big Santa Hugs and Toys. The parents experienced their share of Love, Hope, and Joy as well, all wrapped in big Santa hugs.

For awhile, families were able to put aside some of the stress from the wildfire disaster and find some peace.....

