

The 2013 Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium and the Flood

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11/5/2013

Thursday, September 12, 2013, heralded the beginning of a storm in the Rocky Mountains in northern Colorado. On Friday, September 13, we awoke to learn that the storm had grown into a one in a thousand year disaster closing down most of the roads and facilities in Loveland and the surrounding area. The Staff of the Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium was notified that Larimer County authorities had closed down all events to free up resources for disaster assistance. This included the Event Center where the Symposium was to be held.

The Symposium Staff went into action posting the closing information on our web site, contacting our Demonstrators and as many others as possible. We received a lot of frustrated phone calls from participants that could not get to the Event Center. The rivers in the area had flooded cutting the cities of Loveland and Fort Collins in two; most of the mountain communities were isolated including some of the Demonstrators. North and South travel was impossible.

Those that were outside the area could not get in and those that were here could not get out. Two of the Demonstrators, Ben Pho and Ashley Harwood, worked with Woodcraft of Loveland to set up mini-demonstrations for those that could get there. There were also several other clusters of woodturners that converged on the shops of local Rocky Mountain Woodturner members and had their own turning sessions. Although unhappy about the turn of events, most people were understanding and made the most of the situation.

After the conditions stabilized, the Symposium Staff collected the available information and sent out emails and letters to those that preregistered explaining our situation with pre-symposium expenses and presented them with several options for the fees paid; a donation toward defraying the costs, application toward the 2014 Symposium, a refund or a combination of these. The response we received was rather positive. No one was happy about the cancelation but there were a lot of positive comments about our efforts to put together quality symposiums and to continue into the future.

There was about a 90 percent response to our messages. We received enough donations to cover our expenses. 20 percent of those responding have applied all or part of their fees toward the 2014 Symposium. Several people sent in donations above and beyond their fees paid. Checks have been written and mailed for those that requested refunds and those that did not respond.

The preregistrations for the 2013 Symposium were at a record high leading us to believe that we would have had our best attendance ever. We have notified all of the Demonstrators that we will, schedules permitting, be requesting them for the 2014 Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium. We are planning on the 2014 Symposium to be the best ever.

The 2014 Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium will be September 12, 13 and 14 in Loveland Colorado. There will be information in the American Woodturner and on the web at <http://www.rmwoodturningsymposium.com/>.