



Times-Call photo by Richard M. Hackett

Martin Rodriguez loads a filing cabinet into a truck at the St. Vrain Valley School District warehouse in Longmont on Tuesday. A mountain of surplus school items and even 10 band uniforms from northern Colorado schools are going to New Orleans.

Supply train

Trucks of School Gear head for gutted New Orleans classrooms

By Douglas Crowl

The Daily Times-Call

Longmont - A mountain of surplus desks, chalkboards, copy machines and even 100 band uniforms from northern Colorado schools are going to New Orleans.

In all, the St. Vrain Valley, Thompson and Greeley school districts have donated enough surplus supplies to fill 10 tractor trailer loads to New Orleans.

Four of those truck loads are coming from St. Vrain alone.

"It's just about everything the school could ever need."

Kelly Cobean, organizer

Thought the items are secondhand, old and not pretty, there needed. New Orleans schools officials gutted classrooms because of the flood damage from Hurricane Katrina, said Kelly Cobean, the organizer of the donation runs.

Through his Boulder-based company, Benchmark One, Cobean has been working with New Orleans schools since 2000, helping convert them to standards-based programs.

After Hurricane Katrina, he began looking for ways to help the struggling school systems get back on their feet.

Cobean, first coordinated Adopt-A-School programs, in which local Colorado schools raise money for New Orleans schools.

Now he is gathering surplus school supplies from local districts—even library books and overhead projectors—and shipping them to the Gulf coast.

"It's just about anything the school could ever need,"

Cobean said Thursday standing next to a pile of desks at the St. Vrain Valley school district warehouse in Longmont.

A crew loaded supplies in the first of what Cobean hopes will be 10 truckloads.

It turns out that the school districts have plenty of old stuff and officials were glad to donate it to a good cause, Cobean said.

But Cobean admitted to being a little surprised and overwhelmed by just how much the districts had to give.

“We have realized that we have created a monster for ourselves; he said.

And the monster is the cost of shipping supplies to New Orleans.

Cobean has nailed down the cost of three truckloads through donations and volunteers.

Now he needs to figure out how to finance seven more trips south.

Cobean said he is open to any ideas on how to pay for the remaining truckloads. He can be reached at 303-545-6520



Times-Call photo by Richard M. Hacke

Matthew Cuffel walks past school desks while helping to load furniture into a truck Tuesday at the St. Vrain Valley School District warehouse in Longmont. A mountain of surplus student desks, chalkboards, copy machines and other items are going to New Orleans. In all, there's enough school supplies to fill 10 tractor-trailer truckloads to New Orleans from St. Vrain Valley, Thompson and Greeley school districts.