



FEMA

US&R GENERAL MEMORANDUM – 2016-008

January 29, 2016

FOR: National Urban Search & Rescue Response System
Task Force Representatives

FROM: Dean Scott, Chief
Operations Section
Urban Search and Rescue Branch

SUBJECT: US&R General Memorandum 2016-008 – Dianne Wilson Retirement

As of Monday February 1, 2016, Dianne Wilson (FEMA Region VII) will be retired from the Federal Government after having completed 50 years of service. Dianne has been involved with the National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System (the System) since early in its history, with her first response being the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Through her many years of involvement, Dianne has worked tirelessly to help ensure the System was always moving forward and prepared to respond to any need the Nation and its citizens might have. Her tireless efforts as part of both the System and its Incident Support Team provided pivotal leadership and helped ensure efficient operations to many significant emergency responses while serving as an Emergency Support Function #9 Group Supervisor. Words cannot adequately express our appreciation for Dianne's many years of dedication and service.

The System wishes Dianne success and much happiness in her retirement.

Dianne has written the attached letter *To My US&R Family* and asked that it be shared with the System.

Attachments:

Dianne Wilson Letter – *To My US&R Family*

cc:

US&R Strategic Group
US&R Advisory Group
US&R Branch Staff
FEMA Regional/Federal/International ESF #9 Representatives
IST Members

To My US&R Family:

Wow – 50 years, seems like only yesterday when I had just graduated from high school and started my government career. So 50 years later with 2 marriages, 2 children, 3 granddaughters and 3/4 of my life devoted to my career, I can't believe that it's almost over. I have made many past and present friends along the way. I want to thank you all for making my time here not only memorable, but meaningful.

A true highlight of my career has been the opportunity to work side by side with the FEMA US&R System and task forces. My first deployment with US&R was the Oklahoma City bombing and saw firsthand what an event of that type could do to a human body. OKC was also the first time I had the pleasure of working with Ray Downey and what a true leader he was and instrumental in the development of the program. Needless to say, from that event on I was absolutely hooked on the program and extremely proud of the fact that FEMA US&R is the shining star of FEMA. I have seen things that most individuals that work for FEMA will never see, especially those immediately following a horrific event. These experiences have made me understand what the Nation's First Responders see all the time and I hold them in my highest esteem. Pete Bakersky and I have chased hurricanes from one coast to the other, multiple tornadoes, World Trade Center, etc, but though it all whether we had a mission or not we (IST and TFs) were ready to respond. A special thank you goes to Fred Endrikat, Wanda Casey, Dean Scott, Joe Hiponia, Cathy Deel, Lance Gilmore and especially Pete Bakersky for always being there and making the whole system work.

Throughout my career, I have seen many programs, policies, etc. come and go and then come back only to be reinvented (or so they think) with a different name. I have spanned the spectrum of emergency response and preparedness. When I started, it was coming from an agency under DOD that dealt with preparation for nuclear attack & crisis relocation planning. Now, in today's constant threat of terrorism we know that anything can & will happen and it obviously isn't limited to nuclear activity. Now it's preparing for the unknown and trying to stay one step ahead of those who want to cause havoc across our nation.

Through National Work Groups, meetings, and disaster deployments I have been able to travel and see parts of the U.S. that I probably never would have had the opportunity to see. I have witnessed destruction first hand and have seen people at their lowest, but I was always proud to represent FEMA, as we were there to lend a helping hand.

As I depart this amazing career that I was lucky enough to stick with for 50 years, I feel that I am leaving part of myself behind but also moving on to another journey. Wherever life takes me, I will always remember my FEMA US&R family and the impact you had on my life.

My heart will always be with the FEMA Urban Search & Rescue program and all the friends I have made.

May the Lord watch over you and keep you safe. With All My Love – Dianne