

Disaster Airlift Exercise Sat., April 7, 2018 at San Martin Airport

Contributed by Mark van Wyk
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The South County Airport Pilot Association (SCAPA) will conduct a Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) exercise Saturday, April 7, 2018 at the San Martin Airport. Local residents are encouraged to drop by and bring food items, which will be donated to the Gilroy Compassion Center. The DART exercise simulates the aftermath of a local earthquake disaster. Aircraft will be used to airlift food and supplies to and from San Martin Airport.

South county residents are invited to visit the drive-through at the airport south ramp, across the street from the San Martin Lions Club, 12415 Murphy Ave, San Martin, between 11 a.m. and noon. A bottle of water will be handed out to each visiting car, and residents can drop off a food donation (canned or packaged) that will be flown in the exercise and afterwards donated to the Gilroy Compassion Center.

In a real emergency, such an airlift could be utilized at the San Martin airport to hand out food and other needed supplies to local citizens in an airport drive through. Aircraft could also be used to transport or evacuate citizens in need of shelter or medical attention.

This exercise commemorates the Watsonville lifeline airlift after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, when Bay Area General Aviation pilots flew one-half million pounds of food and supplies to the Watsonville Airport to feed the communities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz. Earlier this year, an air bridge between the California cities of Santa Barbara and Oxnard mitigated the Highway 101 closure after the Monticello mudslides. Saturday's SCAPA DART exercise is preparation for the next big one.

More info.