



## **Groom Texas opens Doors, Hearts and Purse to Communities impacted by Panhandle Wildfires**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GROOM, TEXAS, MARCH 6, 2024** On Tuesday, February 27, as wildfires ravaged small towns in and around Panhandle Texas, the tight-knit community of Groom, situated just twenty miles south, emerged as a beacon of compassion and solidarity. Forced evacuees, seeking refuge from the approaching danger, found solace in the open arms of Groom's residents.

The chaos, calls and texts that flooded Groom, triggered a swift and remarkable response from the community. Restaurants and stores promptly opened their doors, hotels transformed into shelters, and churches and community centers became sanctuaries for those seeking safety. Citizens volunteered tirelessly, embodying the true spirit of unity.

Sandie Conrad-Hickey, a long-time Groom resident, described the rapid development of an extraordinary network of support within thirty minutes. "An amazing chain of people developed, calling and offering every type of help for the evacuees," she said. Conrad-Hickey opened her home and the American Legion Hall, which she manages, to those in need.

Greg Hendricks, Deacon of the First Baptist Church of Groom and Vice President of Garrison Food Mart, received the call to open the church. Within 45 minutes, people began arriving, highlighting the unwavering sense of community in Groom. Hendricks shared, "I have lived in Groom for twenty-two years, and there is one thing I know: the people in this town will rally the troops when there is a need."

The situation became dire as evacuees, frightened and lacking information, sought refuge. Greg recounted, "Everyone was scared and could not get information. They just sat there staring at their phones, waiting for word."

The Grill restaurant was one of the establishments that swiftly opened its doors to serve those fleeing the fires. Karen Brown, The Grill owner, expressed the urgency of the situation, with volunteers showing up immediately to support their efforts. "People just needed a place to feel safe, even for a few hours. Many weren't sure where they were going to go, and with the combination of smoke, fire, and darkness, there was panic and a lot of confusion. People were scared, and many were looking for loved ones they were separated from...it was heartbreaking."

Residents of Groom opened their homes to evacuees, providing comfort during the uncertain hours of waiting to assess the damage to their homes and towns. Deke Alexander, President of State National Bank, worked alongside business owners to set up accounts for emergency items needed by first responders and volunteers. His wife, Samantha, along with staff members from State National bank, coordinated with volunteers throughout the night to ensure essential needs were met.

State National Bank announced that they will be providing the initial donation for SNB Gives, a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that supports disaster relief for the communities of the Northern Texas panhandle. More information about **SNB Gives** can be found at [www.snbgives.com](http://www.snbgives.com). Alexander remarked, "Everyone in Groom knows people who have lost everything...we are a small town, but we respond in a big way when there is a need, and State National Bank is humbled to be a part of this incredible community."

As Groom faces the aftermath of this devastating event, the resilience, generosity, and unity displayed by its residents serve as a testament to the strength of community bonds in the face of adversity.

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For media inquiries or interviews please contact:

**State National Bank Media Contact**

Dawn Sprayman  
State National Bank Media Relations  
marketing@snb.bank  
214-301-9161

**SNB Gives Media Contact**

Dawn Sprayman  
SNB Gives  
media@snbgives.com  
214-301-9161

**About SNB Gives:**

SNB Gives is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that supports disaster relief for the communities of the Northern Texas panhandle. All donations are deemed tax-deductible, absent any limitations on deductibility applicable to a particular taxpayer. For more information visit [www.snbgives.com](http://www.snbgives.com)

**About State National Bank**

State National Bank (SNB) is a locally-owned bank founded in 1904 that has maintained its focus on the community to this day. SNB is a full-service bank with locations in Groom and Amarillo, serving the communities of the northern panhandle including the counties of Carson, Gray, Armstrong, Potter, and beyond. SNB offers full featured products and personalized solutions for consumer and businesses. For more information visit [www.snb.bank](http://www.snb.bank)