

Postal customers deliver for food bank

By Leila Summers / The Daily News | Posted: Saturday, May 8, 2010

Longview and Kelso postal carriers collected 51,500 pounds of food during Saturday's 17th annual National Association of Letter Carriers food drive.

That's a 15,000-pound increase over last year's tally, said Alan Rose, community relations director for the Lower Columbia Community Action Program, which runs the Help Warehouse food bank distribution center at 1526 Commerce Ave. in Longview.

Rose said he isn't sure what prompted this year's surge, though CAP is grateful for the donations.

"My guess would be that people realize the need and they responded. In spite of the economy, people responded generously. This is quite an achievement for the community," he said.

The Longview Post Office collected 37,500 pounds of food, and the Kelso Post Office collected 13,900 pounds, Rose said.

Donations to the letter carriers' food drive, which is the community's second-largest annual food drive behind December's Walk and Knock, peaked at 60,000 pounds in 2002.

Last year, carriers collected 36,140 pounds of food, down from 42,000 pounds in 2008. Rose said a down economy likely caused last year's decline.

"That's why I think this year is so surprising. We're still in the midst of struggling economy, and we were not expecting this type of a response," he said.

Rose extended thanks to the postal carriers and to the volunteers who boxed up food Saturday at Help Warehouse, including Three Rivers Christian School students, Cowlitz County PUD and members of the Altrusa Service Club. Vernie's Pizza and Subway helped feed the group.

Pacific Surgical Institute, Longview Junior Service League and L&J Feed paid for the blue plastic bags delivered to mailboxes for the drive.

Food drive totals for surrounding areas were not available Saturday.