

Fieros and Friends in the midst of a Flood and Pandemic

Heavy rainfalls caused two dams in central Michigan to fail. The resulting flood threatened to destroy the community of Sanford, home of MFC members Linda and Tim Evans. Walls of water 8 to 10 feet high blasted down the streets of their small town. The heart of the devastation to us was the shop and museum Fieros Forever, owned by long time Fiero club members, Tim and Linda.

With little notice, neighbors and friends helped Tim move the cars to what they thought was safe ground, after experiencing minor flooding in the past. The back-to-back failures of two area dams caused a major surge and at one point floodwaters reached above the garage doors of the Fieros Forever building.

A call for help from Linda challenged us to quickly assemble work boots, shovels, chain saws, a wheel barrow and, of course, face masks before heading up north in a caravan. We were pleasantly surprised at the many volunteers for the Saturday clean up. After seeing the pictures on the news and observing the evidence of high water, the streets were dry but piled with rubble.

Looking around the area, it became apparent the incredible force of the water as it carried cars, buildings and home/store contents for blocks, possibly miles. Scattered cars lodged in trees, under sheets of pavement, parts buried in mud and wrapped around trees, Museum models and historical memorabilia was a sad sight to behold. Muddy hands pulled it out piece by piece, leaving thousands more.

The community of Sanford organized a cleanup day, and hundreds if not thousands of volunteers carried muddy and water soaked household goods, salvageable items and debris to the curbs. Townspeople donated food and drinks for residents and volunteers from other areas united in the cleanup effort.

The local landfill extended hours and waived their fee. Local contractors brought in heavy equipment at no cost to residents to aid in the cleanup. It was a joyful effort with everyone working together. What an exhilarating experience it was to be a part of this effort to help our good friends.

Tim and Linda were overwhelmed by the club's response. When we went back the next week, we were amazed at how much progress had been made in the downtown area. One good Samaritan showed up with a power washer and spent hours washing thousands of parts that had been sorted by Floyd outside on the lawn: Doors, consoles, wheels, taillights, dash boards, and instrument panels . . . A Fiero Indianapolis Pace car remains in a tree, despite Lou's perseverance to free it – almost.

Pam and Mike worked tirelessly to drag part after part from the debris. Kristina kept searching for parts she was afraid would be discarded. Lou was anxious to use his chainsaw skills so three Fieros that were underneath could be retrieved. Children from the area kept looking in the nearby woods for parts and built a small bridge across a creek to bring them back to the sorting area. Jim, Ron, Carol, Bette, Laura and Sue stayed busy carting whatever they could to the growing piles of trash. Bette discovered a Fiero banner wrapped and tangled in a tree, but totally intact and presented it proudly to Tim.

Although most of the businesses will be back, it is heartbreaking to think how many lost everything. The amazing fact is that no one was injured or died. What a miracle!