

THURSDAY

Ford smarting over SUVs
Sales lag hurting goal of making '08 profit in North America. — *Heikes, 1B*



Wellspring of life
Blue Spring Heritage Center preserves ancient natural spring. — *Syts, 1E*

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THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2006

SECTION **S**

JUDSONIANS HELP FILL NEEDS OF TAJIKISTAN'S POOR

By Heber Taylor PROMOTIONS CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Malachi Clay of Columbus, Miss., helps a Judsonia church load up mattresses to ship to Tajikistan.

Judsonia is a small White County town, but it figures large in helping poor people in distant lands.

On June 6, Judsonians loaded a 40-foot container with about 22,000 pounds of mattresses, bed linens, clothing, furniture, doctors' scrubs, 15 medical examination tables, and other things needed in the mountains of Tajikistan in Central Asia.

Most of the items shipped will go to an orphanage school where 15-18-year-old boys are sleeping on the floor without mattresses and bed linens. Some of the boys serve as watchmen on farms in order to have a place to sleep.

The shipment is under the oversight of the United States State Department, which supplies the container and pays for shipping. The State Department's Counterpart International Program asked John Kachelman, minister of the Judsonia Church of Christ, to gather the materials because he and the congregation had succeeded with the program in earlier shipments to the Ukraine and other countries.

Asked about the State Department's connection with Judsonia, Sara Magill of Counterpart International said, "We've worked with John Kachelman for a number of years. We know that we can call on him and he will get the church and community involved and get the job done."

Attendance at the Judsonia church is usually between 135 and 175. Members do most of the gathering of items, the preparation of the inventory — which must be approved by the State Department — and the sorting, packing, and loading. Neighbors pitch in to donate needed items and help with the packing.

Materials also come from other Arkansas cities. Contributors to the Tajikistan shipment include the Central Avenue, Antioch, and South Side Churches of Christ in Batesville; the Cloverdale and West Side Churches of Christ in Searcy; congregations in Fort Smith and North Little Rock; Harding University; and ARAMARK Food Service. Compassionate Utilization of Resources in Fort Smith donated medical supplies. In past shipments, Central Arkansas General Hospital and Healthway of Searcy contributed to medical supplies.

When help is needed from outside of Arkansas, Kachelman and the Judsonia church have contacts in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Missouri and Mississippi who will help fill the containers.

Kachelman has preached in Judsonia for about four years. When he was preaching in Kentucky in 1998, his congregation sent about a half-million dollars worth of badly-needed medical supplies to Kiev,

Ukraine, a former Soviet Republic. Initially, the local authorities would not let the



Ignoring the summer heat, Kathy Cadden, left, John Kachelman and Mike Coker load examination tables onto a trailer to be delivered to the country of Tajikistan.

supplies be distributed. They relented after the Americans who went with the shipment threatened to destroy them. "They thought we had come to poison them," Kachelman said. "We wanted to show them that our country is not as bad as some think." Attitudes have changed, and help is now welcomed.

A turning point came when Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana put Kachelman in touch with a State Department humanitarian assistance program called "Operation Provide Hope." He became part of what Sara Magill calls "a wonderful partnership." She said, "If we need something, we call him."

The reward for Judsonia's help halfway around the world is the gratitude of the people. "They're so thankful for even the smallest things," Kachelman said. He and church members especially like to help orphans who are living in pitiful conditions. They are encouraged by Jesus' words, found in Matthew 25:40: "... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."



John Kachelman of Judsonia prepares items to transport to Central Asia.

Many of the orphans in Tajikistan lost their fathers in the civil war of the 1990s. About 30 percent of all men 18 and older were killed in the fighting.

Because of mountains, only about 7 percent of the land in Tajikistan can be farmed. It's considered the poorest of the former Soviet republics. Tajikistan is a mostly Moslem country, but it is friendly toward the United States. It shares borders with two other former Soviet republics on the west and north, China on the east, and Afghanistan on the south.

The people in countries like Tajikistan have many needs and can use things like walkers, wheelchairs, furniture, kitchen utensils, clothing, and medical equipment. The donated materials don't have to be new — long as they're in good shape. John Kachelman said that items people may have in their garages might meet needs in a poor country. Among the new

things being sent in the Tajikistan shipment are school uniforms, donated by North Little Rock's Sylvan Hills Church of Christ.

The containers for the shipments are 40 feet long, 9.5 feet deep and 8 feet wide. Each container can hold 22,000 pounds. Loading takes a full day.

The church is planning more shipments this year. Most will probably go to the Ukraine.

Dean Curtis, one of the Judsonia congregation's three elders, said that the efforts to help others in far-off places "keep the members working together as a group and it

gives us a goal of helping our fellow man." Kachelman said that the apostle Paul's words " ... as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people ... " (Galatians 6:10) would be a fitting motto for any benevolent work. Judsonians, with help from others, are doing good to desperately poor people at the ends of the Earth.

Photos by Kevin Grinstead