South King Fire and Rescue has a long standing relationship with Cabo San Lucas Fire Department in Baja Mexico stretching back to 1997

The Cabo Fire department was a struggling organization with very little money, equipment or training. South King Firefighters vacationing there started up conversations with Fire Chief Juan Carbajal. SKFR firefighter Jeff Hamel along with others from the region spearheaded an operation that collected high quality used fire equipment from various Northwest Fire Departments and shipped it down to Cabo. The equipment varied from uniforms and protective clothing to fire engines and aid cars. To this day South King Firefighters travel to Cabo and teach courses to the Cabo Firefighters every year, We also bring Chief Juan and others to the US for advanced training, the equipment and the expertise is then shared up and down the entire Baja Peninsula.

This relationship blossomed in a new way after the recent devastating hurricanes that tore through Cabo San Lucas this past month. One of the firefighters, who has traveled to our area for advanced training on vehicle extrication courses, had his home flattened by the storm. Agus Alcala's w as sponsored by the Puyallup Extrication team, http://www.thepxteam.org/ a highly regarded training group that South King Firefighters are a part of and another big supporter of Cabo Fire. Agus contacted his colleagues on the team and asked if they could help in any way, Agus ha d sent his family to Mazatlán ahead of the storm and everyone was safe but now they have no home to come back to.



This is what remains of Firefighter Paramedic Agus Alcala's home in Cabo San Lucas

The team rallied around their friend and donations began pouring in.

SKFR Lt. Chris Burdyshaw is an instructor with the extrication team and is also the man behind the recently constructed 9/11 memorial in Federal Way. He and Firefighter Hamel got in contact with Alaska Airlines, who transported a block of limestone from the Pentagon to Federal Way for the memorial. (Related story and photos http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/federal-way-911-memorial) Chris was hoping to secure some space for the collected donations on one of the scheduled flights that Alaska Air was sending to Cabo as part of a relief effort they were conducting. As it turns out they were looking for a contact in Cabo that could help coordinate the distribution of supplies that the airline was sending to the area, Firefighter Alcala's and Cabo Fire were the perfect fit.

The hurricane has severely damaged the areas water and electric and telephone systems . Rebuilding has already begun but it is centered on the airport and tourist areas not private homes. The Puyallup Extrication team have a goal of purchasing a travel trailer and transporting it to Agus as temporary housing for his family. If you would like to help with the relief efforts in Cabo San Lucas you can donate money through the South King Firefighters foundation by clicking here or for more information contact South King Fire at 253-946-7347