

SOURCE: Arizona Republic (Phoenix, AZ)
AUDIENCE: 1,216,307 [provided by Nielsen//NetRatings]
DATE: 08-31-2008
HEADLINE: Supai hurting after floods close village to tourism

Source Website

by Astrid Galvan – Aug. 31, 2008 12:00 AM The *Arizona* Republic

For the past 28 years, Charlie Chamberlain has delivered mail on a mule to the people of Supai, a village at the bottom of Havasu Canyon.

But there isn't much to deliver now that Supai, home to the Havasupai Tribe, is closed to visitors after severe floods left trails and bridges leading to it damaged.

The village, home to about 450 people in the western side of the Grand Canyon, officially closed less than two weeks ago and is expected to remain that way until next spring, according to the tribe's Web site. Tourism is the main source of income there.

Chamberlain's pay from the postal service is based on the amount of pack animals used, which is determined by the amount of mail needing delivery. If the tourist-free lodge doesn't order supplies and the cafe doesn't order food, Chamberlain has no deliveries to make. He's already lost almost 70 percent of business, he said.

And his 15-plus mules – Clyde, Whitey, Rabbit, Big Ben, and others – still need to eat.

So do about 400 other livestock in Supai, owned by various villagers.

Chamberlain, who lives in the village but is not a tribe member, is afraid their owners can't afford food anymore, and it could only get worse.

In fact, he's already seen a drop in orders for horse feed from his wife's company, C4 Livestock and Products.

A concerned Chamberlain said the donations coming in are not enough to keep both villagers and livestock fed and alive.

"I'm not looking for immediate help," he said. "I'm looking for long haul, when all that immediate help stops."

Chamberlain called on business associates Debbie and Ray Hendricks, owners of Chandler-based tour specialist *Just Roughin' It Adventure Company*. The Hendrickses, whose company offers Grand Canyon tours, set up an account for donations and gave \$1,000 of their own money.

"The tribe is very important for us," Debbie said. "Obviously without Havasupai we don't have much of a business."

Donations are needed to feed the 400 or so horses and mules who eat 8,000 pounds of horse feed daily, at a cost of around \$2,000.

Chamberlain said donations are the only way to get by at this point – there's no pasture that horses could eat and selling them is not a likely option.

"In *Arizona* there's a glut of livestock out there and because of the economy people aren't buying horses," he said.

He said he hopes the many people who have come from all over the world to see the picturesque sights will

pitch in.

To donate call 480-857-2477 or 877-399-2477.

* Type Size: A A A

* Print

* Email

* Most Popular

Add your comments Make your voice heard

This is a public comment zone. Readers are solely responsible for the content of their posts and must comply with our Terms of Service and Rules of Engagement. Report offensive content by clicking on the "Report abuse" link.

sign in to click here to register for a free account

Copyright (c) 2008, azcentral.com. All rights reserved. Users of this site agree to the and (Terms updated March 2007) FD HIDDEN DIV

Highlights: Arizona, AZ, ARIZONA, Just Roughin' It, AdventureCompany