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Sewa International

Together We Serve Better

P R E S S R E L E A S E

CONTACT:

Nikhil Jain: +1 - 713-834-4909

Vidyasagar Tontalapur: +1 - 949-414-6624

Email: media@sewausa.org

Web: <http://www.sewausa.org>

Sewa International Launches Disaster Response Vehicle to Strengthen Community Emergency Support

San Antonio, TX – May 18, 2026: Sewa International commissioned its first Disaster Response Vehicle (DRV) on May 2 at Aum Ashram in San Antonio, TX, during Sewa International’s 20th National Conference. The DRV is a purpose-built trailer equipped with emergency response equipment and designed to support rapid deployment during natural disasters and community emergencies.



Disaster Response Vehicle launched — City of San Antonio dignitaries, local chapter leadership, and Sewa national team

The DRV is painted with the Sewa banner and the organization’s guiding motto: “Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity”. It is armed with personal protective equipment (PPE), shovels and mucking tools, safety vests, helmets, thermal insulated jackets, solar-powered generators, and other critical tools used in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Sewa San Antonio chapter leadership, dressed in Sewa’s signature yellow safety vests and hard hats, led the formal unveiling ceremony. Members of Sewa’s national leadership team and board were also present to commemorate this important milestone.

With this launch, San Antonio becomes the first Sewa chapter in the nation to establish a dedicated Disaster Response Vehicle — creating a scalable model that can now be replicated by chapters in the Bay Area, Florida, Houston, and other regions across the country. The DRV is capable of being deployed anywhere in Texas within just a few hours, enabling faster and more effective disaster relief operations when communities need support the most.



A veteran Sewa volunteer enters the DRV (Disaster Response Vehicle) for a walkthrough

Greater Speed & Efficiency

Sewa’s experience responding to the devastating flash floods that struck the Texas Hill Country on July 4, 2025 sparked an organization-wide discussion on how Sewa could prepare and respond to disasters with greater speed and efficiency in the future. That vision culminated in the unveiling of Sewa’s first Disaster Response Vehicle (DRV).

In 2025, within hours of the flash floods, Sewa rapidly mobilized a coordinated, multi-city response effort. Sewa volunteers worked closely with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) to assess urgent needs and deliver critical aid to affected communities. More than 200 Sewa volunteers collectively contributed over 3,000 service hours in Texas Hill Country relief and recovery efforts.

Jose Menendez, Texas State Senator representing District 26 and a San Antonio resident, praised Sewa’s two decades of service to underserved communities at the DRV unveiling ceremony. John Lujan, Texas State Representative for District 118, and San Antonio Councilwoman Ivalis Meza Gonzalez were also present at the event. Congratulating Sewa on the initiative, Representative John Lujan remarked, “This is a fantastic initiative by Sewa toward strengthening disaster response capabilities in San Antonio and beyond. I encourage Sewa to continue working closely with local disaster response agencies to further enhance our collective emergency response efforts.”

Mobile Disaster Response Center

Vinayak Astekar, Associate Director – Disaster Recovery, Sewa International, said, “The first 72 hours after a disaster are critical, making advance preparedness essential for an effective volunteer response. This fully equipped, air-conditioned DRV will support volunteers by storing and dispensing essential gear while also serving as a mobile Sewa DR Control Center. While we hope it is never needed, staying prepared is vital.”

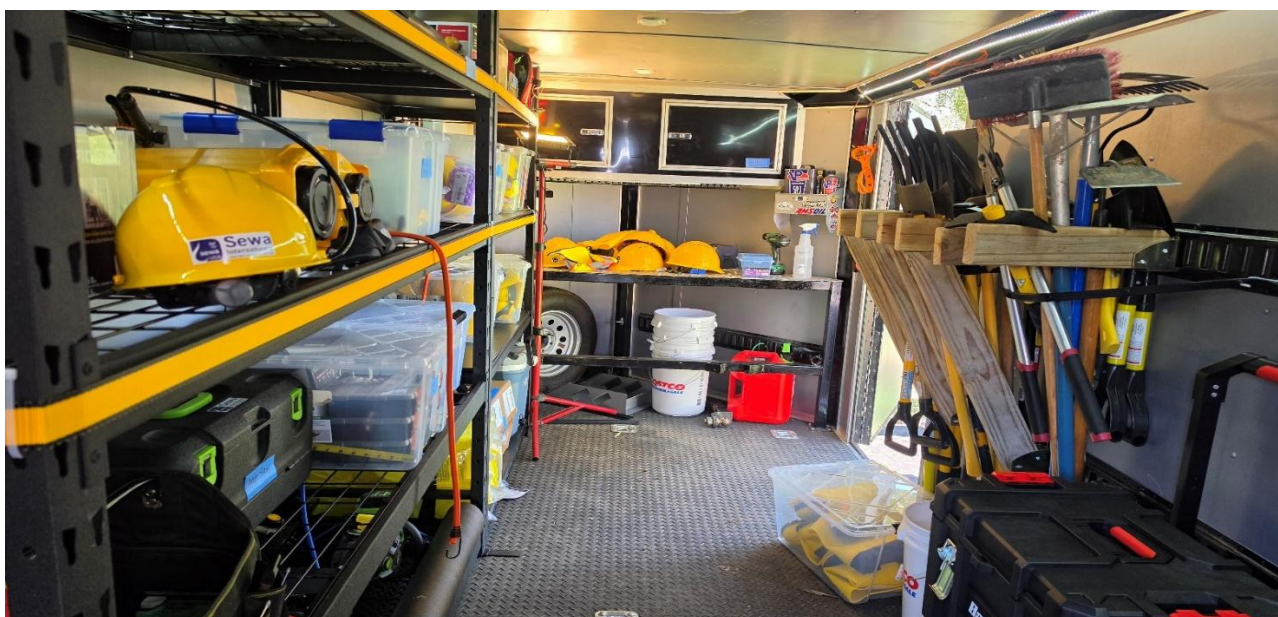
Founded in 2003, Sewa International has grown into an organization with 46 chapters across the US with over 5,000 volunteers. Until 2025, Sewa International has responded to 14 disasters in our country and another 36 disasters outside of the USA, providing Rescue, Relief, and Rehabilitation while rebuilding lives.

About Sewa International

Sewa International (www.sewausa.org) is a 501 (c) (3) Hindu faith-based charitable nonprofit that works in the areas of disaster recovery, education, and development. Sewa has 43 Chapters across the USA and serves regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin.



John Lujan, State Representative, addressing the gathering during the DRV launch



View showing the items stored inside the DRV