

De Luz cut off — but taking it 'very well'

By DON LEARNED

To resident Darline Berg, the flood-trapped community of De Luz looks like the scene of an earthquake.

The mountain roads have caved in. The area is flooded. Avocado groves have been wiped out. Electricity was out for nearly 30 hours and not restored until last night.

The 200 residents have been isolated there since Tuesday, when the raging Santa Margarita River wiped out both access roads to nearby Fallbrook.

"So far, everybody has taken it very, very well," Berg said in a telephone interview.

The phones, at least, have remained in service.

"It's been beautiful," she said. "It's kept our spirits up because we can communicate."

But the main question running through the minds of the families there is when they will be able to get back across the Santa Margarita.

Only four-wheel-drive vehicles can move around, and the men in the area gather daily to seek a route.