

PUYEHUE VOLCANO EMERGENCY – CAULLE MOUNTAIN RANGE WINTER OF 2011- INTERNATIONAL PASS CARDENAL SAMORÉ

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SUMMARY

On June 4th 2011 an eruption of the Puyehue volcano, located in the Caulle mountain range -Chile-, occurred. This location is 20 Km near the Brazo Rincón Winter Maintenance Camp of the Argentinean National Road Division (DNV), within the limits of Villa La Angostura County, Province of Neuquén. This situation was considered a national emergency, and took place during the winter maintenance period of the National Route N° 231, which connects Argentina with Chile through The Andes.

Cardenal Samoré International Pass is located within Nahuel Huapi National Park, near the most important winter touristic centers of the country, as the cities of Villa La Angostura, San Martín de Los Andes and Bariloche.

In this context of uncertainty and lack of experience, with important efforts it was possible to coordinate work fronts with other Provinces Road Maintenance groups, Contractors, the Emergencies Operative Committee (COE), and all kind of Institutions. Some measures were taken, as the closure of several airports (including Buenos Aires) and the International Pass as well. Water supply, gas supply, Electricity and other basic services were momentary suspended.

Visibility was deeply diminished. This was the main reason for the closure of the Pass. The driving conditions were totally unsafe. The Road Maintenance Works during the emergency included the plowing of the ashes, its transport and deposition, and also cleaning of the culverts, ditch scours repair, warning signs placement, brochure distribution, etc.