



News Release

Contacts:

Robbie Wilbur, MDEQ, 601-421-5699
Lauren Thompson, MDMR, 228-219-5226
Greg Flynn, MEMA, 866-519-MEMA (6362)

MEDIA Contacts:

Robbie Wilbur, MDEQ, 601-421-5699
Lauren Thompson, MDMR, 228-219-5226
Greg Flynn, MEMA, 866-519-MEMA (6362)

May 17, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE AGENCIES UPDATE: OIL SPILL RESPONSE ACTIONS

BILOXI– The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality continues to investigate reports of tar balls from Hancock and Harrison counties. Although reports indicate that dead fish and turtles are washing ashore in Hancock County, there are no visible signs that the deaths are oil related and will be further investigated.

Reports show the main oil slick from the BP Deepwater Horizon oil leak is approximately 50 miles from the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Mississippi Departments of Environmental Quality and Marine Resources are still asking the public to AVOID handling any tar balls, and to please report tar ball locations and broken or disconnected boom by calling: (866) 448-5816.

Boom deployment: Incident Command Post in Mobile, Ala. is reporting 86 percent of the area contingency plan is complete with 421,800 feet of boom deployed to protect sensitive areas along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. MDEQ and MDMR are working with BP, the responsible party for the spill, to direct the placement of the boom.

BP Claims: In Mississippi, 2,007 claims have been filed and \$1,470,000 has been paid by BP.

The following are additional actions taken by state agencies and BP in Mississippi in response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico:

MS DEQ: MDEQ, along with EPA continue to monitor air quality. All levels observed so far are safe. Current data from MDEQ, EPA, and the other Gulf states is available at: www.epa.gov/bpspill/air.

-more-

Oil spill response roundup: May 17, 2010

MS DMR: An observation flight is scheduled for tomorrow. Also, MDMR in partnership with MDEQ is still accepting applications for the block grant program to reimburse local governments for their expenses related to the oil spill. Interested county or municipal governments located in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties are eligible for grant awards on a cost reimbursable basis for activities such as mitigation, response and recovery efforts to benefit and protect the coastal environment from the oil spill.

MS Military Department: MMD conducted an overnight flight in order to recon areas of interest to include shoreline and island booming. The flight was extremely successful. MMD officials continue to develop a comprehensive state response plan. Currently 52 national guardsmen are on orders to plan and prepare for any needed activities.

USCG: The dispersants deployed at the sub-sea level and from aerial spray systems continue. EPA has approved the continued use of sub-sea deployment of dispersants as it appears to be effective. In addition, all shipping channels and ports remain open in the Gulf Coast region.

British Petroleum: BP continues to keep our state agencies apprised of its efforts to stop the spill, including the Riser Insertion Tube Tool (RITT), Top Kill, Relief Well, as well as the Top Hat Containment System if the RITT is not successful.

BP has opened three Mississippi community outreach offices, and two Mississippi claims offices. The locations and hours are as follows:

Mississippi Community Outreach Centers:

Hancock County

454 Hwy. 90, Suite K
Waveland, MS 39576
Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Harrison County

1141 Bayview Ave.
Biloxi, MS 39530
Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Jackson County

710 Delmas Ave.
Pascagoula, MS 39567
Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Mississippi Claims Office:

Harrison County

920 Cedar Lake Road, Suite K
Biloxi, MS 39532
Hours: 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Jackson County

5912 Old Mobile Hwy.
Pascagoula, MS 39581
8 a.m. – 7 p.m.

BP continues to monitor air and water samples. To date, 2,876 vessel owners, captains and crew have participated in the training across Mississippi. About 676 vessel owners in Mississippi have submitted charter agreements and about 325 owners are activated and being paid. SBP has contracted local skimmer boat. Two skimmer boats were deployed from Mississippi today, 30 are at a staging area and 40 are en route.

Small Business Administration: Business Recovery Centers are set to open Tuesday, May 18. Businesses may obtain loan information and application forms by calling SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or (800) 877-8339 for the hearing impaired, e-mailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, visiting SBA's website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance, or visiting a local Business Recovery Center. Offices have been set up at the following locations:



News Release

Contacts:
Robbie Wilbur, MDEQ, 601-421-5699
Lauren Thompson, MDMR, 228-219-5226
Greg Flynn, MEMA, 866-519-MEMA (6362)

George County

George County Emergency Operations Center
355 Cox Street
Suite J
Lucedale, MS 39452
POC: Lorraine Howell
Office: 601-947-7557

Hancock County

Civic Center
335 Coleman Ave.
Bay St. Louis, MS
POC: Tammy Fayard
Office: 228-467-4134, Cell: 228-254-0190

Harrison County

TBA

Jackson County

Jackson County Fairgrounds Ticket Office
2902 Shortcut Rd
Pascagoula, MS
POC: Jim Hart or June Seaman
Office: 228-762-6043

Stone County

Stone County Courthouse
323 E Cavers Ave., Wiggins, MS
POC: Raven James
Office: 601-762-5084

MS State Department of Health: MSDH continues health surveillance in the three coastal counties for health conditions that may be oil spill related. MSDH is participating in an environmental and public health task force with Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, EPA, FDA, CDC and BP. MSDH continues to respond to questions and inquires from the public, and is continuing to providing oil spill health information on our agency website, www.healthymys.com.

MS Department of Mental Health: Community Health Centers on the coast are still prepared to deal with any potential mental health response. Neither of centers has reported any cases where individuals have come in for mental health assistance to date.

MS Emergency Management Agency: MEMA continues to staff Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties with planning, operations and public information personnel.

MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks: MDWFP has scheduled Hazardous Waste Operations Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) certification, in Biloxi, for 25 additional officers on Wednesday, May 19, and Thursday, May 20.

MS Board of Animal Health: Representatives visited the tri-state site in Gulfport to identify manpower needs. The MBAH is communicating with animal, agriculture, natural resource agencies within the state and in the region to maintain consistent and accurate messages.

Civil Air Patrol: CAP flying to support MDMR has been suspended for this week.

MS Department of Employment Security: The WIN Job Centers and the MDES call centers are working with employers to post job orders and refer job applicants to jobs related to the oil spill. MDES is accepting applications from coast residents seeking paid oil response work at WIN Job Centers as well as online at www.mdes.ms.gov.

MS Development Authority: MDA reports no travel restrictions or disruptions on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The state's coastal businesses, both traditional business enterprises and tourism and hospitality-related businesses, are open for business as usual.

-more-

MS Commission for Volunteer Service: MCVS is working with multiple agencies to create a pre-impact, coast watch team, while also trying to determine other appropriate volunteer response. MCVS is scheduling meetings with county EMA directors along the coast in efforts to explore each community's immediate needs and offer volunteer assistance. Volunteer reception center locations will be available soon. MCVS is accepting registration of volunteers at www.mcvs.org, and is working with BP to identify prospective volunteer activities.

Please check www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com for regular updates on the spill and the response.

Important Phone numbers:

Submit Claims to BP: 800-440-0858

Report oiled Wildlife: 866-557-1401

Report oiled Shoreline: 866-448-5816

Alternative technology, services or products: 281-366-1555

Vessels of Opportunity: 281-366-1555

Volunteer 866-448-5816

Report fish kills: 228-523-4128

Register with the MS Commission for Volunteer Service for non-paid volunteer opportunities at www.mcvs.org.

#