



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2011

State agencies responding to storm recovery and river flooding

PEARL – The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is coordinating with other state agencies as well as the Salvation Army and Red Cross to assist those recovering from severe storms and preparing for the Mississippi River flooding.

The following are reports of ongoing operations:

MEMA: The State Emergency Operations Center is operating at Level 1, the highest level:

- Coordinating disaster assistance and registrations in the 11 declared counties and continuing damage assessments in several additional counties along with FEMA.
- Mobile Operations Command Center is in Monroe Co., MEMA Communications Unit is in Webster Co.
- Providing staff, conducting briefings and processing requests to Mississippi River and Yazoo Basin counties for ongoing flooding threat.
- Coordinating efforts with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, National Weather Service, FEMA and other state agencies for potential flooding.
- Public Information line is 1-866-519-MEMA (6362), latest updates on www.msema.org.

Mississippi Department of Transportation: MDOT reports that Highway 25 and Highway 23 through Smithville in Monroe County will remain closed to traffic due to disaster recovery operations. A detour route around Smithville is now in place. If motorists are traveling north on Highway 25, they will be routed West on Highway 6, North on Highway 371, and East on US 78. If traveling South on Highway 25, or Highway 23, motorists will be routed West on US 78, South on 371, and East on Highway 6. The detour will remain in effect indefinitely. Highway 465 is closed in Warren and Issaquena counties. Motorists can log onto www.MSTraffic.com for traffic information and can call about highway closures due to flooding at 601-359-7074.

Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service: Volunteer Response Centers are currently coordinating volunteer activity in five Mississippi counties. MCVS is deploying unaffiliated volunteers from our office in Jackson, the SEOC, social media sites as well as the field. We have documented 3,588 volunteers serving over 13,159 hours since Friday. Volunteers from several National Service programs, funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, are working with local officials, MSVOAD, faith-based and community organizations in affected areas of Mississippi. AmeriCorps teams and staff are all serving vital needs throughout the state for both tornado relief and flood preparation. MCVS is tracking donation of goods drop-points on our website, www.mcv.org and rapidly publishing information through Facebook www.facebook.com/volunteeryall and Twitter www.twitter.com/volunteeryall. All monetary donations can be sent to MississippiRelief.com, a fund established by Governor Barbour.

American Red Cross: Volunteer efforts continue in affected areas and two shelters are open:

- Tunica: GW Henderson Community Center, 1165 Abbay Dr., Tunica.
- Quitman: M.S. Palmer High School, Hwy. 3 South, Marks.

Salvation Army: Feeding operations continue in areas that have no electricity. Staff continues to provide prepared
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meals, comfort kits, snacks, food boxes, drinks, emergency financial aid, spiritual care and other services in affected areas. Reports portable showers units are setup to Smithville. Staff will continue to monitor flood zone and are prepared to respond.

Mississippi Board of Animal Health: Storm related: Extensive damage was done to poultry houses and other farm structures on the east side of the state. The MBAH is consulting with poultry companies regarding euthanasia and disposal permits. The MBAH is working with the animal shelter in Monroe County to assess needs and facilitate requests for resources. **River flooding:** The MBAH and the MVMA have contacted animal shelters and veterinary clinics along the Mississippi River from Tunica to Natchez. These shelters are undertaking preparations to move out adoptable animals to make room for animals that may be affected by the flooding. Owner/pet/animal evacuation and sheltering information will be available on the MBAH website at www.mbah.state.ms.us. The MBAH hotline number is 1-888-722-3106. Donations may be made to the MS Animal Disaster Relief Fund to help animals and their people affected by these disasters. Information on making a donation or applying for assistance can be found on the following websites: College of Veterinary Medicine, www.cvm.msstate.edu and Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association, www.msvet.org.

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality: As a result of flooding forecasts and rising water levels for the Mississippi River, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality advises Mississippians to think about possible environmental issues that can result if flooding reaches their homes, farms, and businesses. The release of oil, gasoline, or chemicals into flood waters can be an environmental hazard. MDEQ requests that if residents observe any releases of oil, gasoline or chemicals or any stray barrels, waste containers, cylinders and pressure vessels that they promptly report the discovery to the state's 24-hour spill line: 800-222-6362 or 601-961-5171.

Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce: Landowners impacted by recent tornadoes may be eligible to receive financial assistance for reforestation efforts through the Emergency Forest Restoration Program. The purpose of the EFRP is to make payments available to owners of non-industrial private forest land who are approved for program participation and carry out measures to restore land that is damaged by natural disasters. Program sign-up will continue thru May 20, 2011. Additional information on the EFRP is available at Farm Service Agency offices and on the website <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> and www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

Mississippi Department of Employment Security: Currently accepting applications for Disaster Unemployment Assistance from those living or working in counties that received a federal disaster declaration. Affected workers have until June 1, 2011 to apply. Self-employed workers may also be eligible. Workers can apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security website at www.mdes.ms.gov. Workers also may call the agency's call centers at 601-855-3133 or 888-844-3577 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Mississippi Department of Mental Health: Natural disasters like tornadoes can cause serious stress and depression. Victims of the tornadoes are encouraged to talk about their feelings, even though it may be difficult and to rely on support groups like family, friends, local churches, and local community mental health centers. For more information about behavioral health resources in your area, contact the Mississippi Department of Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-210-8513.

Mississippi Department of Human Services: Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits are available for residents affected by the April 15-18 severe weather in Kemper, Hinds and Greene Counties today through Friday. Residents must have incurred disaster related expenses as a direct result of the severe weather to be eligible for the one-time only benefit. Current SNAP recipients are not eligible for DSNAP benefits. For more information go to: <http://bit.ly/j8yOJB>.

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Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks: Currently has six officers deployed to Tunica County for safety and security patrols of flooded areas around casinos.

Mississippi Attorney General: The Mississippi Attorney General's Office is sending investigators to affected areas with consumer education materials to help prevent cases of home repair fraud. If you are suspicious, do not hire the worker and report your concerns to your local law enforcement agency or our Consumer Protection division at 800-281-4418. A list of consumer tips can be found at www.agjimhood.com.

Mississippi Insurance Department: The Mississippi Insurance Department is assisting storm victims in north MS, our Mobile Assistance Center is set up at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Smithville. State Fire Marshals are also still assisting local authorities in the area. Commissioner Mike Chaney has issued a 60-day moratorium on cancellation or non-renewal of certain policies for storm victims. Certain criteria have to be met. For more information visit www.mid.state.ms.us.

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