

Beat: Politics

## August, 24 2016 Mr President Barack OBAMA in Louisiana

US Gov

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**USPA NEWS** - "Last week Louisiana was struck by an intense, slow-moving storm that produced record rainfall, up to 30 inches in some places, that flooded an expansive area across the lower half of the state -- robbing so many Louisianans of their businesses, homes, and sense of security.

That's exactly what the President directed us to do: Support and assist the people of Louisiana, no matter what it takes.

Today, President Obama traveled to Baton Rouge to see the federal response effort firsthand.

FEMA with our federal, state, private sector, and nonprofit partners are working around the clock to help make sure Louisianans have what they need to recover and rebuild their lives. Recovery is a long-term process, it's important that Louisianans know: You're not in this alone and we're with you for the long haul.

The state of Louisiana continues to deal with a significant level of flooding and one of the worst natural disasters in recent years. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson traveled to Louisiana yesterday to assess damages with Governor Edwards, Federal and state responders, and the National Guard, meet with survivors in shelters, and receive an update on the response to ongoing flooding in the state. During the press conference with Governor Edwards, Secretary Johnson reiterated the President's message that the Federal government will continue to do everything we can to help the survivors and get people back into homes.

According to the National Weather Service, significant river flooding will persist into this weekend across portions of southern Louisiana as a result of the heavy rainfall that occurred late last week. Major flooding will mainly continue along portions of the Vermilion and Mermentau Rivers over the next several days. Moderate flooding will continue along the Amite and Calcasieu Rivers through the weekend. Additional rain is possible over the weekend in Louisiana where pockets of flash flooding may develop as a result of this additional rainfall.

President Obama has declared 20 parishes for a major disaster for severe storms and flooding, a declaration that makes federal funding available to affected people in Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, Washington and West Feliciana. In addition to the 20 parishes, FEMA is conducting a joint Federal and state damage assessment in Assumption and St. Charles.

This federal assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Last week when flooding began, President Obama spoke with Governor Edwards of Louisiana last Thursday and ordered federal aid last week to support state and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding -- support that will continue as state and local officials in the affected areas address the impacts of the disaster.

Providing housing remains a top priority.

FEMA and Louisiana state officials have convened a Strategic Housing Task Force to explore immediate temporary housing solutions for displaced survivors. The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced it will speed federal disaster assistance to Louisiana and provide support to homeowners and low-income renters forced from their homes due to severe storms and flooding. At FEMA's request, HUD will coordinate the federal government's Housing Recovery Support Function to provide resources and assistance in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of destroyed and damaged housing, and development of new permanent housing, where needed. In support of this mission,

HUD has deployed a team of disaster recovery experts who will be ready and staged in Louisiana on Monday, August 22.

FEMA is also supporting Louisiana's Disaster Housing Task Force to help Louisiana residents displaced by the flooding find access to housing. FEMA activated its Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program, at the request of the state of Louisiana, to make participating hotels or motels available for eligible disaster survivors who are unable to return to their homes for an extended period of time. This program is intended to provide short-term lodging for eligible survivors who are currently residing in a personal vehicle, hotel or motel, shelter, or place of employment.

The Small Business Administration is also opening Business Recovery Center in Walker, LA to provide a wide-range of services. As of today, SBA has issued more than 57,000 applications to homeowners and businesses.

Right now, FEMA, through its regional office in Denton, Texas, is highly engaged in response efforts in Louisiana as flooding continues across areas of the Gulf Coast. FEMA staff are on the ground in Louisiana as FEMA continues to coordinate closely with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. FEMA is also monitoring potential flooding in Texas and in states across the Gulf Coast.

As of this week, the Corporation for National and Community Service has assigned 310 AmeriCorps members serving through FEMA Corps to relief efforts, including 114 AmeriCorps members on the ground in Louisiana to support disaster assistance and other critical tasks and 196 members remotely staffing survivor call centers. In addition, 39 AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) members serving through the American Red Cross have deployed to Baton Rouge to support sheltering, disaster assessments, and feeding.

Here's what FEMA is doing on the ground in Louisiana:

- \_ More than 979 housing inspectors are on the ground in Louisiana verifying damages reported by survivors who have registered for assistance. The number of inspectors is expected to increase rapidly over the next several days.

- \_ FEMA established an Incident Support Base in Camp Beauregard in Pineville, Louisiana to distribute supplies such as water, meals, cots and blankets to the state of Louisiana. These include over 800,000 liters of water, over 800,000 meals, over 20,000 cots, and 42,000 blankets.

- \_ FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) personnel and equipment are deployed to the Incident Support Base in Pineville to support the state with secure and non-secure voice, video and information services

to support emergency response communications needs.

- \_ After the state requested a Federal Urban Search & Rescue task force, FEMA has deployed Texas Task Force 1 to Louisiana.

- \_ Six FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams are deployed to Louisiana to support response activities and ensure there are no unmet needs.

Louisiana residents impacted by flooding can directly apply for assistance online or by phone. Already, more than 106,000 people in Louisiana have registered for FEMA Individual Assistance, and more than \$55 million has been approved to help survivors with temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs, and other serious disaster-related needs.

More than 25,000 National Flood Insurance policyholders have submitted claims for flood loss. Additionally, FEMA has authorized and issued \$11 million in advanced payments to NFIP policyholders in Louisiana who sustained damages by the flood providing expedited relief to disaster survivors.

#### Resources

how to file a claim with FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers will continue to open in locations identified by the state to provide information to survivors.

Disaster survivors do not need to go to a DRC in order to receive disaster assistance. Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) have opened in Tangipahoa and St. Helena parishes where survivors can apply for assistance and meet face-to-face with recovery specialists.

First and foremost, you should return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.

If you can safely return to your home, and have filed an insurance claim or applied for FEMA assistance:

- \_ Be ready when an adjuster or housing inspector calls
- \_ Take pictures
- \_ Make a list
- \_ Remove water damaged items to prevent mold
- \_ Don't have damaged items hauled away until adjuster or inspector sees or gives the ok

If you have flood insurance, you can get up to \$5,000 for building and contents damages prior to the adjuster's inspection with a signed advance payment form from your adjuster. Depicting the flood damage and validating out of pocket expenses, may get the insured up to a total of \$10,000.

An important note: When cleaning up your home, assume everything touched by flood water is contaminated and will have to be disinfected. Residents who are able to start cleaning up should do so with care.

Most importantly, don't put yourself at risk. Follow the instructions of local officials -- and if told to evacuate, do so immediately." US Government Source from 20D

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