

## **Disaster News Update – March 17 to 23, 2008**

### **RECENT DISASTER / HAZARD ACTIVITY (Past 7 days)**

- **Biological:** Colorado (Salmonella Outbreak)
- **Building Collapse:** New York (Crane Collapse)
- **Drought:** Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Maryland
- **Explosion:** Arkansas (Meat Packing Plant), Indiana (Factory), Wisconsin (Chemical Plant), Tennessee (Oil Well)
- **Fire:** Oklahoma, California, Arizona, New Mexico Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Florida, Hawaii
- **Flood/Flash Flood:** Illinois, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Indiana
- **HAZMAT:** Arkansas (Ammonia Leak), Indiana (Hydrochloric Acid)
- **Heavy Rain:** Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Indiana, Florida
- **Severe Winter Weather:** Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota, Illinois
- **Strong Wind:** Georgia, Massachusetts, Tennessee, North Carolina, New York, Louisiana, Mississippi
- **Tornado:** Georgia

### **CURRENT FEMA MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS (Past 30 days)**

- [Georgia](#): Severe Storms and Tornadoes (3/20)
- [Missouri](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (3/19)
- [Wisconsin](#): Snow (3/19 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Texas](#): Wildfires (3/14 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Illinois](#): Snow (3/13 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Missouri](#): Severe Winter Storms and Flooding (3/12)
- [Illinois](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (3/7)
- [Kentucky](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-Line Winds, and Flooding (2/21)
- Fire Declarations: [Oklahoma \(3/21\)](#), [Texas \(3/20\)](#), [Texas \(3/19\)](#), [Texas \(3/14a\)](#), [Texas \(3/14b\)](#), [Texas \(3/14c\)](#), [Texas \(3/12\)](#), [Texas \(3/4\)](#), [Texas \(2/28\)](#), [Texas \(2/25\)](#), [Oklahoma \(2/25\)](#), [Texas \(2/25b\)](#), [Texas \(2/23\)](#)

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS**

#### **Volunteer crews join forces in cleanup** (Atlanta Journal Constitution, 3/23)

On opposite sides of downtown Atlanta on Saturday, homeowners and volunteers, some from other states, used chain saws, brooms and their own sweat to restore neighborhoods crushed by last weekend's tornadoes. In Cabbagetown, an eclectic neighborhood east of downtown, hundreds of volunteers queued up for their assignments. In Vine City, where many of the residents are low-income, dozens of yellow-shirted volunteers from various congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were waiting when the Rev. Dexter Johnson got to the meeting place for the day's work. "They're like little ants," Johnson said as he watched volunteers quickly reduce two large uprooted oak trees

to manageable size across the street from the Mount Gilead Baptist Church, which lost portions of its roof and was flooded in the storm. City workers were removing the chopped-up tree trunks and debris almost as quickly as volunteers put it beside the street. "One of our goals is to work with the community and to serve the community," said Hee Jin Cho, who brought her friends from the Asian Christian Fellowship at Georgia Tech. That is how she and four friends used their spring break. And it's how a dozen students from Tulane University in New Orleans used theirs, working in Cabbagetown to help clear debris. "It's been amazing," said Jacquesse Williams, who planned to return to Louisiana after the work was done Saturday. Henry Kekoolani, 17, and Christopher Taylor, 16, from a Walton County Mormon group, used a claw hammer to methodically hack away weighty red clay that clung to the roots of a tree in Vine City. Nearby, volunteers from several churches laid out food for the 100 to 150 volunteers, some of whom came from as far away as Savannah and Dublin. About twice that many workers were in Cabbagetown.

**Katrina Volunteers Rebuild Lives** (Disaster News Network, 3/22)

Nearly three years since Hurricane Katrina slammed ashore along the northern Gulf Coast in August 2005, volunteers are still picking up the pieces of broken lives and trying to put them back together in something approaching normalcy. It's no easy task. The conditions are difficult. While volunteers are often plentiful and willing to work, the money sometimes trickles in and government programs, designed to help, are sometimes unwittingly in the way. But volunteers push on. One person, one house, one street, one neighborhood at a time. And the work is getting done. Slowly. "It doesn't look like much has been done except if one takes a look at photos from a week after Katrina," said Scott Sundberg, director of communications for the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). "Of course it could be more, but sometimes fast isn't best. We're doing things slowly, but properly." The Mennonites have concentrated their efforts in smaller cities and towns where they can establish relationships with the people and local government officials. They believe that in that way, people will get to know them and their work and will come to work with them to rebuild their homes. In Pass Christian, Miss., MDS rebuilt about more than a dozen homes. It may seem like a small number, he said, but to those families it means everything

**Red Cross paid \$688,000 for unused CA hotel rooms** (Associated Press, 3/21)

The American Red Cross said Thursday that it paid \$688,000 for hotel rooms that went unused during last year's wildfires in Southern California. The charity said in a statement that it paid for 6,074 "room nights" at San Diego-area hotels that went unused about 22 percent of the 27,714 total nights booked during the wildfires, which destroyed nearly 2,200 homes and killed 10 people. "It was our mistake, we regret it, and we will cut expenses at national headquarters to make up the cost of that error and take steps to ensure it never happens again," said Joe Becker, who oversees disaster services for the American Red Cross. The cost was much higher before the charity negotiated refunds with some hotels, said Red Cross spokeswoman Laura Howe. She would not release the initial costs. The charity admitted last month that it lacked safeguards against paying for unused hotel rooms during natural disasters. The Red Cross spent about \$140 per day on room, transportation and food stipends for 2,490 volunteers who flew to San Diego. Each

volunteer stayed for about two weeks, Howe said. Some rooms were booked at the storied Hotel del Coronado and the swanky La Costa Resort and Spa, as well as several Hiltons. Howe blamed the problem partly on disaster workers arriving before a headquarters was established and workers couldn't adequately assess the changing scope of the disaster. The Red Cross also pointed to the company that handled the hotel bookings, Corporate Lodging Consultants Inc. of Wichita, Kan., saying it had access to an unusually large number of rooms. The company has held the Red Cross contract since 1998. In a typical disaster, only 40 to 45 motels would be used. During the Southern California wildfires, though, Corporate Lodging Consultants booked rooms at 74 properties, which proved difficult to manage for the disaster team, particularly without computers and e-mail, Howe said.

**Volunteers Help Georgia, SC Cleanups** (Disaster News Network, 3/19)

Work crews in Georgia and South Carolina were cutting back limbs with chain saws, cooking meals and pulling debris from houses after tornadoes tore a swath through portions of both states on Saturday. While national network coverage focused on the damaged arenas and skyscrapers, many homes in Cabbagetown and Vine City were also damaged by the storms. Lynn Barnes who works at the International Theological Center said she passes through Vine City, where residents struggle daily just to make ends meet. Houses are old and, often were already tattered, even before the storms. In the days after the storm, Barnes said, it's looking even grimmer. Some of the houses are without roofs. Those that remain are battered. Fences are twisted and ripped like overused bread ties. And trees, many of which had stood for a hundred years or more are ripped from the ground and smashed on the street and into the houses. "It's a mess in the streets," she said. "People are doing what they can to fix things up, but they're going to have a lot of work to do for a long time." At the Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church, where community volunteers are often assembled in times of crisis, members are trying to patch up a portion of the roof that was sheared from the building. The steeple is askew, hanging precariously to the right side of the building. Barnes said the power and telephone service appear to have been restored in the area, while neighbors are helping neighbors with quick fixes to their homes. In South Carolina, that state's Baptist Convention sent 18 teams to eight locations on Sunday, the day after the tornadoes moved through.

**COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS**

N/A

**RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS**

**Forecasters Warn of Flooding in Arkansas** (Associated Press, 3/23)

High water pouring down the White River could cause historic flooding in cities along its path in eastern Arkansas, forecasters warned Sunday. The river, one of many out of its banks across wide areas of the Midwest, could top levels recorded in a devastating flood 25 years ago, National Weather Service meteorologist John Robinson warned. "There

will be water going into areas where people have not seen it before, and may not be expecting to see high water," Robinson wrote in an e-mail to reporters Sunday. A tributary of the White River, the Black River, ruptured a levee in two places Saturday near Pochontas, said Renee Preslar, a spokeswoman for the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. That stream has been bloated by water pouring downstream from hard-hit southeastern Missouri. Preslar said the levee breaks allowed flooding in outlying areas but she did not have details on what might have been damaged. The Army Corps of Engineers worked through the night to plug the breaks with sandbags, and that work appeared to be holding as of Sunday afternoon, Preslar said. "Right now, it's kind of a wait-and-see game," she said.

**Midwesterners Fight Deadly Spring Floods** (Associated Press, 3/23)

As floodwaters pushed against the Valley Park levee, Tracy Ziegler pushed a cold beer toward one of his customers at Meramec Jack's bar and grill. Like many residents of this small Meramec River town, Ziegler had been confident the new levee would pass its first test. "I haven't even lifted my computer off the floor in the office," said Ziegler, who bought the bar in 2005, just after the Army Corps of Engineers finished the levee a few hundred yards away. Residents of small towns along the Meramec breathed a sigh of relief Saturday as the river crested following days of flooding caused by torrential rainfall across the Midwest. At Valley Park, the river rose to a peak of 37.8 feet Saturday morning, well above the flood stage of 16 feet but still below the record of 39.7 feet, according to the National Weather Service. Elsewhere, rivers were still rising in southwest Illinois and parts of Arkansas, chasing people from their homes and into shelters. Rivers had mostly begun receding in Ohio. At least 17 deaths have been linked to the weather over the past week, and one person was missing in Arkansas. Thousands of people in Missouri had fled to Red Cross shelters or to the homes of friends or relatives. In southern Missouri, water poured through several breaches in levees and led authorities to evacuate towns west of Cape Girardeau. At least 200 homes and 13 businesses had been evacuated in Cape Girardeau County, said emergency management director Dick Knaup. At least 70 Missouri counties have reported flooding this week. Much of the flooding in Illinois was in sparsely populated areas, but several dozen people were evacuated from their homes in Murphysboro on Saturday, said Patti Thompson, a spokeswoman for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. "For some of these places, this is their 500-year flood," she said.

**Bush declares more counties as disaster areas after storm** (AP, 3/22)

President Bush has issued a major disaster declaration for six more Georgia counties in response to the tornadoes and severe storms that struck the state last week. This list now includes Bartow, Burke, DeKalb, Floyd, Jefferson and Polk counties. The president had already declared Fulton County a disaster area, making federal funding available to residents. FEMA also said that Burke, Fulton and Jefferson counties will be able to receive federal funds to offset 75 percent of the emergency response and repairs. Other areas of the state damaged by the storms are still under review, the agency said. Gov. Sonny Perdue said he was grateful for the declaration. "Last weekend's storms caused damage across our state, and the addition of these counties to the federal disaster declaration means much needed assistance will be available in the areas where it is most

needed," said Perdue. A tornado ripped through downtown Atlanta March 14, doing millions of dollars worth of damage to the World Congress Center, the city's major convention center and other major downtown buildings. At least 27 people were hurt and officials believe one person was killed by the tornado, which cut a six-mile path moving along the Atlanta skyline for about 20 minutes. Storms struck other areas of north Georgia March 15, and at least two people were killed.

**MO Governor Announces Joint Damage Assessment Teams** (Press Release, 3/22)

Gov. Matt Blunt announced beginning Tuesday eight joint federal and state damage assessment teams will begin collecting property damage information for citizens and businesses in 41 counties impacted by the statewide flooding. "These teams will work with local officials to gather damage information for personal flood related losses and economic losses to Missouri businesses," Gov. Blunt said. "Many Missourians are now returning to their flood damaged homes and businesses, and we want to get the damage assessment process moving as quickly as possible which will help expedite the recovery for those affected by these devastating floods." Gov. Blunt noted the eight teams will look at citizen and business losses first in 41 counties. As local damage information becomes available, additional counties maybe added to the joint damage assessment visits. The first counties to be visited are: Bollinger, Butler , Cape Girardeau , Christian, Camden , Carter, Crawford, Dent, Douglas , Franklin , Gasconade , Greene, Howell, Iron, Jasper, Jefferson , Laclede, Lawrence , McDonald, Madison , Maries, Newton , Oregon , Osage, Ozark, Phelps, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, St. Francois , St. Louis , Scott, Shannon , Stoddard, Stone, Taney , Texas , Washington , Wayne , Webster and Wright. The joint damage assessment teams are comprised of FEMA, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), SBA and local government representatives. The teams will canvas areas with local officials verifying damages to support Blunt's request for Federal Disaster Assistance for Citizens and Businesses. Later, the joint teams will begin collecting information associated with damages to public property, critical infrastructure, and debris removal to support Blunt's request for the Federal Disaster Declaration for Public Assistance.

**Tulsa Public Schools still cleaning up debris** (Tulsa World, 3/22)

Tulsa Public Schools maintenance personnel have collected and mulched enough debris from the Dec. 9 ice storm to fill an area as big as a football field 12 stories high. "It was something else," said Jay Oates, manager of the district's grounds department. Oates compiled a report on the district's response to the ice storm that included statistics on the debris cleanup effort. According to the report, trees that lined the sidewalks at Sequoyah Elementary School and Hale High School were lost, and all of the district's sites -- close to 90 of them -- had to be cleared by the 34-member maintenance staff. Most sites have been cleared, but at least four major ones, including Central and Webster high schools, will be cleared in the next two weeks. Oates said crews initially were taking truckloads of debris to the city's dump sites, but they started hauling debris to their own site near 71st Street North and Victor Avenue because they were losing work time waiting in lines and traveling to the city sites. The debris collected and mulched will be used for landscaping and as playground padding at some school

**Floodwaters drive thousands from their homes** (Chicago Tribune, 3/21)

At Third and Orleans, the Great Pacific Coffee Company turned into ground zero Friday in the battle against what locals have dubbed the "Great Flood of '08." With floodwaters already swamping 184 homes and 36 businesses in this historic railroad hamlet, the family that owns the century-old building put up a valiant stand. They built a berm out of hundreds of cocoa-colored sacks filled with sand. They waited with flood pumps and hoses. And inch by inch, they watched the muddy water lap at their life's treasure as they waited to retaliate. "If we can just keep the water out we have a fighting chance," said owner Dave McHugh, whose family built the three-story red brick building in the early 1900s with artifacts from the 1904 World's Fair. "We won't let it go down easy." Across hilly swaths of suburbia southwest of St. Louis, feverish fights were waged Friday against the surging Meramec River reaching near all time highs. Mostly, the uncontrollable river was winning: waters overflowed their banks for miles around and already drove thousands from their homes — most to relatives' homes or hotels. Across the heartland, flood-weary residents fought to save their homes from Arkansas to Ohio, but here at the edge of the looming disaster, where headwaters teased, many tried to contain it.

**AR says hundreds of homes damaged by flooding** (Associated Press, 3/21)

Torrential rains this week that led to widespread flooding damaged hundreds of homes and caused at least \$2 million in damages to infrastructure, the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management said late Thursday in a preliminary report. The agency said Baxter County had one home in danger of falling into floodwaters, 49 uninhabitable homes, 40 homes with major damage, 30 inaccessible homes and 75 homes with minor damage. Carroll County had six flooded homes, and Berryville had a broken water main that is affecting 50 residents, the agency said. In Sharp County, 60 homes had major damage and 50 homes had minor damage; the city of Hardy also reported \$2 million in damage to public infrastructure, ADEM said. Hardy also reported two homes destroyed by the flooding. Yell County reported \$50,000 in damage to county infrastructure, while Washington County had one flooded home, two homes with flooded basements and three inaccessible homes after a bridge was washed out, ADEM said.

**IL Governor opens camping facilities to those displaced by flooding** (AP, 3/21)

The state of Illinois is opening many of its camping facilities to those displaced by flooding, free of charge. Governor Rod Blagojevich has declared 19 southern Illinois counties state disaster areas after a massive storm dumped up to a foot of rain. The campsites and cabins are located in southern and central Illinois. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency doesn't know how many residents have been displaced. State employees helped 75 people evacuate this week, but others left on their own or were helped by local authorities. Blagojevich urged residents of Grand Tower in Jackson County to voluntarily evacuate Friday after the Illinois Department of Natural Resources found weaknesses in a levee along the Big Muddy River.

**Record-setting rains leave trail of despair** (Kansas City Star, 3/20)

It has been a quarter of a century, folks say, since southeast Missourians experienced flooding as damaging and dangerous as what slammed that area the past two days. With

at least five people dead following record-setting rains, and untold numbers of homes, businesses, and roads swamped from overflowing rivers and creeks, people across southern Missouri are taking stock of losses and preparing appeals to state and federal officials for help. "We've been through these before," said Brian Polk, presiding commissioner of hard-hit Wayne County. "You survive and get through it and start cleaning things up." The last time such floods hit his region, Polk recalled, was 1982. The Kansas City chapter of the American Red Cross is dispatching five volunteers today to Cape Girardeau. More than two dozen counties reported closed roads, water rescues, evacuations and infrastructure damage, according to the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency. Law enforcement personnel rescued dozens of people from stranded cars and homes surrounded by deep water. But five people died.

**FEMA teams to visit SC to assess tornado damage** (Post and Carrier, 3/20)

Federal officials will visit South Carolina today to survey the millions of dollars worth of destruction caused by 17 tornadoes that tore through the state Saturday. Gov. Mark Sanford has asked FEMA to assess the damage in hopes of getting a presidential disaster declaration and federal aid for those who lost homes or businesses. More than 85 homes and eight businesses were destroyed in the storms. Another 88 homes had major damage, and 383 had minor damage, according to the S.C. Emergency Management Division. State officials visiting Berkeley County on Monday weren't optimistic that the damage met the federal threshold for FEMA funds, but they said Wednesday that it was worth asking. The FEMA officials will arrive around noon and break into teams with local and state officials soon after that. The preliminary damage assessment teams will consist of officials from FEMA, the state Emergency Management Division, the affected counties, the Red Cross and the SBA. Each team will survey the type of damage, the costs involved and the number of people displaced, said Derrec Becker, public information coordinator for the state Emergency Management Division.

**President Declares Major Disaster For Georgia** (FEMA, 3/20)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for Georgia to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes during the period of March 14-16, 2008. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Fulton County. Paulison said that FEMA 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. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Paulison named Elizabeth Turner the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Turner said surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are fully completed in the affected areas.

**Damage assessments begin in Oklahoma** (Tulsa World, 3/20)

As they awoke Wednesday to clearing skies, eastern Oklahomans finally could take in the aftermath of 24-plus hours of steady rain. Between 2-1/2 and 9 inches fell from Monday morning through early Wednesday by a slow-moving storm system, leaving flooded

homes, washed-out bridges and damaged roads. Counties receiving the most rain included Wagoner, Muskogee and others south and east, according to the National Weather Service. High, swift water damaged roads and bridges in some areas, with several roads remaining closed through late Wednesday across several counties. Wagoner County Emergency Management Director Randy Cole said he submitted a request Wednesday to state officials to have his county declared a disaster area. "We had three bridges washed out and a number of county roads that suffered significant damage," he said. "We have some roads that have 3-foot ditches cut across them from the water." Cole said the bridge damage alone would total more than \$300,000. He said officials would survey the area more closely and have a complete report on the damage by the first of next week. "The rain just about cut the county in half with the southern half experiencing the most," Cole said.

**Flooding widespread in southwest Indiana** (Associated Press, 3/20)

Heavy rain that drenched southern Indiana caused widespread flooding Wednesday, prompting some residents to leave their homes and schools to close. A total of 7.7 inches fell at Evansville Regional Airport over about a two-day period before the storm ended Wednesday night, according to the National Weather Service. "We've got water rising everywhere," said Jeff Korb, president of the Vanderburgh County Commissioners, late Tuesday evening. "We've got more than 70 roads under water." The Red Cross set up a shelter Wednesday for people displaced by flood waters in Evansville. Gov. Mitch Daniels planned a helicopter trip Thursday to survey flooding in Orange County, which was under a state of emergency after the weather service said the county received between 5 and 7 inches of rain in a 36-hour period. "The entire county is just really hit hard with the water," said Orange County Emergency Management Director Jeff Combs. "We have one shelter open in Paoli, and we have done some evacuations in Paoli and French Lick." About 20 people were evacuated Wednesday from the historic West Baden Springs Hotel near French Lick, and sections of Indiana 37 and Ind. 150 were closed due to flooding, said sheriff's dispatcher Tina Peyton.

**Flooding, heavy rain sweeps Ohio, swamping homes, cars, roads** (AP, 3/20)

Heavy rain pounded Ohio on Wednesday in the aftermath of recent massive snowfalls, swamping cars, submerging roadways and sending people scrambling for higher ground. Much of the state was under a flood warning, with some areas cautioned to watch for flash floods. Most of southwest Ohio had received 3 to 4 inches of rain, with up to 2 more inches expected through the evening. Authorities said a 65-year-old woman who died early Wednesday apparently drowned after checking on her home's sump pump. The Hamilton County coroner will determine the official cause of death, the first in Ohio tied to the heavy rain and flooding. Authorities said Whitewater Township resident Betty Lou Wood appeared to have drowned in rising water, with a grate covering for the sump pump in her garage on top of her. The storm moving through Ohio dumped up to 10 inches of rain in Missouri and forced hundreds of people to flee their homes across the nation's midsection. At least seven people were killed or missing in other states. Whitewater Township Fire Lt. Jim Davis said rescue workers with boats helped 16 people to safety and urged 40 to 45 more families to leave their homes "so we wouldn't have to come back for them later." Judy Booth, who's lived in a low-lying area of the

township for 11 years, said Wednesday was the first time she's had to flee from flooding. "You don't have no choice, you've got to go," said Booth, who was helped by fire-rescue squads who brought an inflatable boat for her to her water-surrounded home. Eight people who were flooded out of their apartments in Kettering were given hotel vouchers by the Dayton-area chapter of the American Red Cross.

**President Declares Major Disaster For Missouri** (FEMA, 3/19)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for Missouri to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on March 17, 2008, and continuing. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency protective measures, limited to direct federal assistance, in Audrain, Barry, Barton, Boone, Bollinger, Butler, Callaway, Camden, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Cedar, Christian, Cole, Cooper, Crawford, Dade, Dallas, Dent, Douglas, Dunklin, Franklin, Gasconade, Greene, Hickory, Howard, Howell, Iron, Jasper, Jefferson, Laclede, Lawrence, Lincoln, Madison, Maries, McDonald, Miller, Mississippi, Montgomery, Moniteau, Morgan, New Madrid, Newton, Oregon, Osage, Ozark, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Pike, Polk, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, St. Charles, St. Clair, St. Francois, St. Louis, Ste. Genevieve, Shannon, Scott, Stoddard, Stone, Taney, Texas, Vernon, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, and Wright counties, and in the Independent City of St. Louis. Paulison named Michael L. Parker the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Parker said that additional designations may be made at a later date after further evaluation.

**President Declares Emergency Federal Aid For Wisconsin** (FEMA, 3/19)

FEMA today announced that federal aid has been made available to supplement state and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow and near record snow during February 5-6, 2008. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the President's action makes federal funding available to the state and eligible local governments in Dane, Dodge, Green, Jefferson, Milwaukee, Rock, Walworth, and Washington counties. Paulison said that FEMA has been specifically authorized to provide assistance to state and eligible local governments on a cost-sharing basis for emergency protective measures that were undertaken to save lives and protect public health, safety and property over a continuous 48-hour period during or proximate to the incident period. Paulison named Edward Smith as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

**PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS**

**National Response Framework in Effect** (FEMA, 3/21)

FEMA announced that the National Response Framework (NRF), successor to the National Response Plan goes into effect on Saturday, March 22, 2008. On January 22, 2008, the NRF was initially released following an extensive process of outreach and

coordination between the Department and key stakeholders representing federal, tribal, state and local governments, non-governmental agencies and associations, and the private sector. The NRF was posted in the Federal Register for sixty days, as required by law. Now that the timeframe has passed, the NRF goes officially into effect. The NRF focuses on response and short-term recovery, articulates the doctrine, principles and architecture by which the nation prepares for and responds to all-hazard disasters across all levels of government and all sectors of communities. The NRF also focuses on preparedness and encourages a higher level of readiness across all jurisdictions in a streamlined document that is less bureaucratic and more user-friendly than its predecessor. During the past sixty days of the initial announcement, FEMA has been conducting outreach and training efforts for emergency managers and federal, state and local officials at all levels of government about the concepts and principles of the NRF. The NRF is intended for senior elected and appointed leaders, such as federal department and agency heads, state governors, mayors, tribal leaders, city managers and the private sector and Emergency Management practitioners. The NRF is designed to be scalable, flexible and adaptable, always in effect, and articulates clear roles and responsibilities among local, state, and federal officials. Part of the educational and outreach efforts include the release of the on-line training course "IS-800.B National Response Framework, An Introduction," which can be found at: [www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS800b.asp](http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS800b.asp)

**Washington, DC warming scenario sees flooded airport** (Washington Times, 3/21)

The Bush administration has set aside its skepticism about global warming to begin planning for the scenario that major Washington-area infrastructure, including Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, could be inundated by rising seawaters. The U.S. Capitol and Lincoln Memorial also could be flooded frequently in a climate-changing scenario described in a study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The study anticipates a 12-inch rise in sea level along the Atlantic coast by 2050 if the ice caps continue to melt from a buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It includes maps of how the Washington area could be affected. The study does not represent a policy change by the Bush administration, but is merely an attempt to plan ahead, said Ian Grossman, a spokesman for the Federal Highway Administration. "The purpose of this study is to say that when you're making decisions about transportation planning, then issues of the impact of climate change and other environmental factors need to be a consideration," Mr. Grossman said. The study warns that about 823,075 acres in Maryland would be "impacted by regular inundation or at-risk" by 2100 unless sea walls or other barriers are built to protect the land from a roughly 19-inch rise in water levels. Rail lines and airports would have to be moved and some streets abandoned if they are not protected. Regular inundation means flooding either permanently or nearly any time there is significant rainfall. At-risk refers primarily to storm surge.

**UC Berkeley students given disaster supplies** (Contra Costa Times, 3/20)

UC Berkeley students now have a supply of axes, crowbars and flashlights to help in the next big earthquake or fire. The City of Berkeley on Thursday awarded \$18,000 worth of supplies to students who live in fraternities, sororities and cooperative housing. The supplies, including electrical generators, flashlights and two-way radios, are in sheds in six different locations, one on the north side of campus and five on the south side, said

Berkeley Deputy Fire Chief Gil Dong. Dong dreamed up the idea and wrote the grant awarded by the Office of Homeland Security. It's part of a larger citywide program that gives supplies to neighborhoods. Currently 34 neighborhood groups in Berkeley have supplies worth about \$180,000 to fight fires and rescue people. In addition to the supplies, students trusted to take care of the goods will get free training in how to use them from both the city of Berkeley and the American Red Cross. The supplies benefit about 2,000 students living in 60 cooperative housing programs.

**NJ Businesses join emergency teams in disaster planning** (Star Ledger (NJ), 3/19)  
Private businesses will team up with Morris County's emergency response teams to help prepare for potential disasters, county officials said. In an agreement hammered out with the Morris County Chamber of Commerce, county officials said major businesses and corporations would voluntarily submit lists of resources - everything from firefighting and medical expertise to warehouse space - to an inventory that could be available for emergency situations. "When it comes to catastrophe planning, it's important to know what private industry has out there," Morris County Emergency Management Coordinator Richard Loock told the county freeholders at their meeting in Morristown last week. "They have far more resources than government. They have special equipment we could never afford." The plan calls for the list of business resources to be compiled in the county's Resource Directory Database, which would include strict security codes and be available only to each private provider and county emergency management officials. There would be no cross-sharing of information, so companies would not have to worry that competitors might get access to sensitive data, stressed Loock. "There will be lots of passwords, lots of security, it will be very restrictive," Loock said. Morris County Chamber of Commerce President Florence Block said the business community and law enforcement agencies have worked more closely since the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. But it was a subsequent disaster that was the impetus for a better private-public partnership. "After Hurricane Katrina, everyone realized the private sector could be very important in helping deal with emergency responses," said Block. "Unfortunately, nothing was in place there to tap available resources that could have been used to help in that disaster."

## **GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS**

**Cash crunch jeopardizes Katrina relief network** (New Orleans Times Picayune, 3/19);  
A network of private relief workers that helped thousands of battered families put their lives together after Hurricane Katrina has begun unraveling with thousands of families still on waiting lists, even as its managers cast about for new sources of money to keep it going at a reduced level. As the network shrinks, about 4,600 families will have to wait longer for help, officials of the network said. Some might become entangled in more red tape -- and face longer waits -- as their files are shifted from laid-off workers into new hands. Members of the network are sorting through their cases, trying to prioritize which families need immediate help before the program shuts down March 31 and their cases are transferred, said Tom Costanza, a local Catholic Charities relief executive who leads the board of the Greater New Orleans Disaster Recovery Partnership, a coalition of

private relief groups. "We're trying to correct it at all levels, but no question it's going to have an impact," he said. At its peak the network called Katrina Aid Today said it paid the salaries of 400 caseworkers across the country who helped families, some of them homeless, repair their lives. Nearly 175 worked in the New Orleans area, officials said. Nationally, the network helped nearly 200,000 people and disbursed nearly \$138 million in goods and services, spokeswoman Enid Johnson said. In many instances the caseworkers used their contacts in the social-service world simply to lead bewildered families through the labyrinth of post-Katrina aid, relief officials said.

**New Orleans Homeless Rate Swells to Four Percent** (USA Today, 3/16)

Cedric Allen once wrestled with his crack addiction in an apartment he shared with his fiancée or in a home surrounded by his four grown daughters. Today, Allen, 48, struggles with the same addiction alone in a camping tent under an interstate overpass in downtown New Orleans. His daughters and fiancée are gone, displaced by Hurricane Katrina. His old apartment is unaffordable. Allen is one of an estimated 12,000 people who are homeless in New Orleans, many of whom landed on the streets after Katrina. Homeless people account for 4% of the city's overall population — more than four times that of most cities. "It's rough going," said Allen, a day laborer. "You might have a job one day, two days, maybe even a month. Then, nothing." Advocates for the homeless and officials said many of the city's homeless are like Allen: low-income residents who lost apartments after Katrina because of rising rents. Many also struggle with drug addiction or mental illnesses. Some are out-of-town laborers who came to work in the post-Katrina building boom then lost their jobs, said Mike Miller, a director with UNITY of Greater New Orleans, a group that advocates for the homeless. Katrina destroyed many of the outreach centers that serviced drug addiction and mental health problems, Miller said. Charity Hospital, which housed the city's main public psychiatric ward, has also been closed since the 2005 floods.