

Disaster News Update – June 2 to 8, 2007

RECENT DISASTER / HAZARD ACTIVITY (Past 7 days)

- **Drought:** Wyoming, California, Arizona, Minnesota, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, North Carolina
- **Fire:** Utah, Arizona, California, Alaska, Nevada, Georgia, Florida
- **Heavy Rains / Flooding:** Louisiana
- **Tornado:** Iowa

CURRENT FEMA MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS (Past 30 days)

- [Oklahoma](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (6/7)
- [Nebraska](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (6/6)
- [Iowa](#): Severe Storms, Flooding, and Tornadoes (5/25)
- [Rhode Island](#): Severe Storms and Inland and Coastal Flooding (5/25)
- [Kentucky](#): Severe Storms, Flooding, Mudslides, and Rock Slides (5/25)
- [South Dakota](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes and Flooding (5/22)
- [Massachusetts](#): Severe Storms and Inland and Coastal Flooding (5/16)
- [Connecticut](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (5/11)
- [Kansas](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (5/6)
- [Vermont](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (5/4)
- Fire Declarations: [New Jersey \(5/16\)](#), [California \(5/10\)](#), [Georgia \(5/9\)](#), [Florida \(5/8\)](#), [Florida \(5/7\)](#), [Georgia \(5/5\)](#), [Florida \(5/2\)](#)

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS

New Habitat project puts faith into action (New Orleans Times Picayune, 6/7)

Construction has begun on the first of six new Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West homes in the Faith Village on Slemmer Road near Mandeville. The homes will be built by volunteers and through financial donations from a number of faith-based groups. The sponsors of Faith Village include the Northshore Jewish Congregation, the Samaritan Center, a coalition of area churches involved in social outreach and the Young At Heart Senior Adult Ministry of the First Baptist Church in Covington. The first house under construction is being coordinated by volunteers from the International Orthodox Christian Charities, or IOCC. Nick Chakos, IOCC development officer, said the organization has been active in relief efforts throughout the area following Hurricane Katrina and recently sought a local partner to assist in the long-term recovery process.

Feel Good Tour keeps school music playing (N.O. Times Picayune, 6/7)

Bill Hudson's Feel Good Tour returned to Slidell recently to deliver an assortment of gently used band instruments to the students of St. Tammany Junior High School. The Feel Good Tour began Oct. 19, 2005, providing free community concerts and donating thousands of instruments to musicians of all ages in the region devastated by Hurricane Katrina. "We want these people in the affected areas to feel good, to enjoy the live free music played by musicians who care. This is something that really matters now. Music can make a real impact on their emotional well being," Hudson said. Hudson is working

with The Steven Spring Foundation, a project started in the wake of Hurricane Katrina by Oregon musician and piano tuner Peter Spring. Spring recalled that he awoke one morning determined to help the overwhelmed people of New Orleans cope with their devastating loss and grief. For information about the project, visit <http://www.stevenspring.org>.

Heritage Fest will assist Northshore Recovery (N.O. Times Picayune, 6/7)

A post-Katrina, not-for-profit organization helping elderly, disabled, uninsured and underinsured homeowners in three parishes will use its share of Slidell Heritage Festival proceeds as seed money to rebuild several additional homes in the community. Northshore Disaster Recovery, which is based on the Aldersgate United Methodist Church campus in Slidell and has satellite offices in Franklinton and eastern New Orleans, will provide volunteers to man the children's section at the annual July Fourth celebration in Slidell's Heritage Park. The volunteers will include Minnesota and Michigan residents, visiting the area to rebuild homes, said Dale Kimball, NDR executive director. Since October 2005, NDR has rebuilt 324 homes with about 10,000 volunteers from 45 states and 12 countries. On any given day, the organization has 70 projects under way with 150 to 250 volunteers and gains eight to 10 new cases.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS

List for evacuation help is short -- way too short (San Antonio Express, 6/7)

Whether it's fear of Big Brother, complacency or old-fashioned procrastination, too few coastal residents who could need help fleeing the next big hurricane are registering with the government. Consider Houston's sobering numbers. Last year, with the trauma of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita fresh on their minds, 3,000 Houstonians who weren't capable of evacuating by themselves signed onto a local "special needs" registry for front-door transportation service, if need be. This year? Only 500. Despite their best-laid and most intricate disaster plans, state and local officials holding hurricane preparation drills this week agreed Wednesday that finding people needing evacuation help poses their biggest challenge. About 8,000 coastal residents from Brownsville to Beaumont have asked for government evacuation help this year via a statewide 211 hot line, said Jack Colley, chief of the governor's division of emergency management. "They may not have the money. They may not want to drive. They may be elderly or shut-ins. This allows them a method to contact somebody and get some assistance.". While 8,000 is only a fraction of the 3.2 million coastal residents who could be subject to mandatory evacuation, Colley said the number only captures 211 calls.

Faith Takes a Front Seat in Planning for Flu Pandemic (Washington Post, 6/6)

Fairfax County houses of worship are starting to plan for the unthinkable but possible: a pandemic flu that could sweep the country, sickening and killing millions. More than 125 leaders from churches, synagogues, temples and mosques met recently at the Fairfax County Government Center to grapple with questions ranging from the practical to the theological as they began preparing their communities for the possibility of a flu outbreak. Houses of worship could play a crucial role in managing such an epidemic, say

religious leaders and health officials, because they have such large constituencies and are intimately involved in the daily life of the community. Not only are they gathering places for hundreds of thousands of parishioners and groups such as Scouts and senior citizens, but they also minister to the disadvantaged.

New school-based emergency response training preps staff (Newark Star Ledger, 6/3)

In a classroom filled with inspirational posters and plastic containers of crayons, the students kept their three-ring binders open and followed the instructor. "This presentation is not designed to make you terrorism experts," said Hillsborough police Officer James Maguire IV, the township's Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator. "I've incorporated some videos in here," he said, trying to teach them how to keep their eyes peeled for signs of trouble. They "might have a situation like we had in the last couple of weeks, where it's a bomb scare. You can recognize that it's something out of the ordinary." This was not a room full of second-graders. The adults, most of them clad in jeans and sneakers, were teachers, staff members and the principal - who had on a tie. All of them are on staff at Woods Road School, where the township Office of Emergency Management has launched its first school-based Community Emergency Response Team. "Our goal is to eventually have a CERT team in every one of the nine schools in the district," Maguire said, before administering one of the last training sessions at the elementary school. In the background, Chief David Gwin of the Hillsborough Rescue Squad recapped some of the lessons learned during nearly 30 hours of training. Topics ranged from terrorism to CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator.

Florida Homes Get Hurricane Help (Disaster News Network, 6/2)

Low-income residents in 12 Florida counties are getting a little extra help this hurricane season to protect their homes from storm damage. Under the state-funded My Safe Florida Home program, a total of 4,000 homes will be getting hurricane-rated storm shutters, stronger exterior doors, sturdier garage doors and improvements to roofs, all free of charge. "Everybody who lives in the state of Florida should know the importance of having shutters on their windows and just how much more secure you can be," said 22-year-old Vanessa Hernandez, who was watching as her mother's home in Broward County was being outfitted with the window coverings. "I feel more secure for them, too." Residents in the counties of Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, Escambia, Osceola, Glades, Hendry, Pinellas, Polk, Santa Rosa and St. Lucie are participating in the program, which is being coordinated by non-profit agencies in each county.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS

Oklahoma Disaster Declared (FEMA, 6/7)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Oklahoma to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding during the period of May 4-11, 2007. 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 work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding in Atoka, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Comanche, Dewey, Ellis, Greer, Kay, Kiowa, Lincoln, Noble, Nowata, Okfuskee, Pottawatomie, Roger Mills, and Seminole counties. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Paulison named Philip E. Parr as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Parr said damage surveys have been scheduled and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are completed.

Volunteer Efforts Needed to Supplement MO Recovery (MO Valley Times, 6/7)

Although FEMA is on the scene and the machinery of the federal disaster agency is going into gear, there is much that can and continues to be done by local volunteers to help victims of the May 6 and 7 flooding, here. Cristi Zack, who along with her husband, Mark, and son, Russ, head up the volunteer aspects of the mitigation, said Monday that these efforts will continue. She announced that the Disaster Food Assistance may be available to households affected by the storms and flooding that followed in the county. That includes households not previously certified and households that may have received food aid last month. She said the Department of Human Services is taking applications at Missouri Valley High School, June 4-12 from 10 a.m. to 12 Noon. Applications may also be filed at the local DHS office during regular business hours, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 1-800-326-7732 with questions. Zack said that for the next three weeks, daily, volunteers, churches and organizations are needed to feed victims and other volunteers at the fair kitchen in the park, between 30 and 40 people most days, but up to 250 on weekends. She said the meals are served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Also needed daily will be 10 box lunches for community service workers who have been assigned to the disaster clean-up.

Nebraska Disaster Declared (FEMA, 6/6)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Nebraska to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes during the period of May 4-19, 2007. 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 work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes in Blaine, Brown, Cass, Custer, Gage, Garfield, Jefferson, Johnson, Keya Paha, Knox, Loup, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, and Wheeler Counties. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Paulison named Lee H. Rosenberg as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Rosenberg said damage surveys have been scheduled and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are completed.

Long Term Recovery Set in Aberdeen, SD (Disaster News Network, 6/6)

Faith groups and community organizations in Aberdeen are forming a long-term recovery committee to help the thousands of residents impacted by flooding in early May. The groups met Thursday and again Monday and Tuesday with a Church World Service representative to start planning the recovery. "Things are looking good for them," said Tom Davis, a disaster response and recovery liaison for Church World Service who led the meetings. "It's got a good cross section of community-based resources and faith community representation." The United Methodist Committee on Relief was providing case management training and the Aberdeen committee members were also working with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee on securing a needs assessment on the community. The flooding damaged 1,300 homes in Brown County, with the majority of the damage being in Aberdeen. At least 38 homes were destroyed and more than 130 have been condemned after inspections. More are being condemned as damage assessments continue.

New Hampshire Recovery Aid Reaches \$6.4 Million (FEMA, 6/6)

Federal and state disaster assistance for individuals, families and communities to help in recovery from April's nor'easter has surpassed \$6.4 million, according to FEMA and New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM). To date, \$2,853,592 in grants under the Individuals and Households program have been approved for 1,057 households; \$3,144,400 in low-interest disaster loans have been provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration for 75 homeowners and business owners; and \$417,350 in Public Assistance reimbursement grants have been approved for New Hampshire communities. The following is a summary of ongoing recovery efforts as of close of business June 5, 2007:

- 1,776 individuals have applied in the disaster-designated counties for Individual Assistance (Belknap- (112, Grafton - 78, Hillsborough - 498, Merrimack - 230, Rockingham - 518, and Strafford - 340).
- \$2,638,621 in Housing Assistance has been approved for 1,022 applicants, to cover rental assistance, temporary lodging, and repairs to make the home safe and sanitary.
- \$214,971 in Other Needs Assistance has been approved for 167 applicants, to cover personal property loss, medical or dental costs and other serious disaster-related expenses, not covered by insurance.
- \$3,144,400 in loans has been approved by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for homeowners and businesses. To date, 1,449 home loan and 208 business loan applications have been issued. SBA continues to operate a Disaster Loan Outreach Center in Manchester.
- \$417,350 in Public Assistance has been obligated to reimburse local governments and certain private non-profits for eligible emergency protective services, debris removal and the repair and rebuilding of infrastructure. To date, 209 Requests for Public Assistance have been received from eligible applicants.

Funds Needed for More FL Mobile Homes (Disaster News Network, 6/5)

As response organizations continue case management from the Feb. 2 tornadoes in central Florida, many say the biggest need will be for funds to replace mobile homes. "A

lot of our areas that were hit were very rural and had a vast majority of mobile and modular homes," said Michael Tart, chairman of the Lake and Sumter County Emergency Response committee (LASER). "We'll have very few rebuilds but many more replacement of homes." The tornadoes that tore through Lake, Sumter and Volusia counties killed 21 people and severely damaged or destroyed more than 800 homes. Tart said some homes were completely disintegrated with only slabs remaining. Marilyn Swanson of the Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church said many residents won't be able to afford home replacements, and that is where the recovery organizations and committees must step in.

NY Disaster Assistance Tops \$23 Million (FEMA, 6/5)

More than \$23 million in disaster grants and low-interest loans has been approved for homeowners, renters, and business owners who suffered damages during the April 14-18 nor'easter, according to officials with the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

To date, 7,679 New York households in the seven-county disaster area have registered for individual assistance (IA). Counties eligible for IA are Albany, Dutchess, Orange, Richmond (Staten Island), Rockland, Ulster, and Westchester. Homeowners, renters, and business owners who have suffered loss or damage and who have not yet registered need to do so before the June 25, 2007 deadline. Recovery efforts to date include:

- More than \$9 million in grants to 4,232 households has been approved by FEMA for home repairs and renting alternative housing.
- Nearly \$840,000 in grants to 730 households has been approved by the State of New York and FEMA for other serious needs.
- More than \$13 million in low-interest disaster loans have been offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to 309 households and businesses.
- More than 2,800 people affected by the disaster met with recovery experts at special Disaster Recovery Centers set up throughout the region to provide help.
- Nearly 8,400 individuals met with FEMA mitigation experts at numerous Mitigation Outreach centers at home supply stores to learn techniques to help lessen future disaster damages.

PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS

4 LA Parishes Say They're Ready for the Next Big One (JEMS.Com, 7/7)

The architects of a new emergency response plan that links computers in four parishes and creates a problem-solving "fusion center," a mutual-aid pact and a central evacuation command post expect regionalism to trump parochialism if a major hurricane strikes the New Orleans area this year. As the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season opened this week, sophisticated new WebEOC computer software was being installed at emergency operations centers in Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes. The software -- bought as a regional resource by the four local governments using a \$224,000 federal Homeland Security grant -- will allow emergency managers and decision-makers in each parish to closely track all requests for aid, keep up with the movement of

resources and personnel regionwide and respond to real-time data from an unfolding disaster.

White House revises post-disaster protocol (Boston Globe, 6/3)

The Bush administration is writing a new plan to maintain governmental control in the wake of an apocalyptic terrorist attack or overwhelming natural disaster, moving such doomsday planning for the first time from FEMA to officials inside the White House. The policy requires all government agencies to have clear lines of succession if top officials are killed and be prepared to operate from a new headquarters within 12 hours of a catastrophe. They must be prepared "to lead and sustain the nation during a crisis" - a charge ranging from "providing leadership visible to the nation and the world" to "bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes or attacks." The policy replaces a Clinton-era "continuity in government" post-disaster plan.

Florida Shelter to take people and pets (St. Petersburg Times, 6/3)

It won't be ready in time for this hurricane season, but Hernando County officials are laying the groundwork for an emergency shelter for pets and their owners. Both the County Commission and the School Board have approved plans to use Parrott Middle School as a pet-friendly shelter beginning with the 2008 storm season. During the busy 2004 storm season, officials encountered many residents who ignored evacuation orders to stay with their pets during Hurricane Charley. So when Hurricane Frances approached a few weeks later, they opened the Animal Services shelter at 19450 Oliver St. near the fairgrounds in Brooksville to the pets of all residents facing evacuation. Previously, the shelter had been open only to pet owners with special medical needs. While that shelter will still be available this year for families who need to shelter a pet, officials say it's a poor solution, with limited space and no room for owners to remain with their animals. The new Parrott shelter will eventually solve that problem, with space for about 120 dogs and 240 small dogs or cats, as well as their owners. Caged pets will be sheltered in one internal corridor while owners sleep in another.

GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS

Local governments' money for rebuilding safe for now (N.O. Times Picayune, 6/5)

Gov. Kathleen Blanco's commitment of state-controlled money to the projected Road Home shortfall does not yet threaten about \$620 million previously slated for local government rebuilding projects, state officials said again Monday. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin called that good news, citing the \$317 million Orleans Parish was originally promised. But the mayor tacitly acknowledged a warning that the Blanco administration and Louisiana Recovery Authority executives have offered since the Road Home gap emerged last month as the latest post-hurricane crisis: Everything is on the table. Local infrastructure investment is one of many issues that await the outcome of ongoing discussions between state and federal officials over how to shore up an impending Road Home deficit estimated between \$2.9 billion and \$5 billion. While not conceding to criticisms, the Blanco administration promised to commit about \$715 million toward bailing out the Road Home, with much of it coming from money freed up by President

Bush's recent concession to waive Louisiana's match requirements for certain FEMA aid. But Blanco's initial offer leaves local financing intact.

Deadline extended for free razing of buildings (N.O. Times Picayune, 6/2)

The deadline for New Orleans residents to apply for free demolition of storm-damaged buildings has been extended until Aug. 29, Mayor Ray Nagin's office said. That is three months later than earlier announced, meaning the demolitions likely will continue until nearly the end of the year. The Army Corps of Engineers handles the free demolitions for FEMA, which until Friday had agreed to pay the full cost of the demolitions only through Aug. 29, the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. It takes as long as three months for an application to be processed and a demolition carried out, and some callers to the city's hotline this week were told that it was too late to apply. The announcement from Nagin's office of a three-month extension caught the corps and FEMA by surprise, but a few hours later FEMA spokesman Ronnie Simpson issued a statement saying: "FEMA will support the decision of the state and city to have the corps continue with this mission until the task is complete." There could be several thousand buildings remaining in the city that are so badly damaged they need to be demolished. An initial survey after Katrina estimated that 15,000 buildings would need to be torn down.