

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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President Obama Declares Major Disaster for Indiana

Michigan City, IN --- Mayor Chuck Oberlie and John Jones, Director of Emergency Management, issued the following statement today:

The recent efforts of Michigan City and La Porte County Officials to track flood damage in and around Michigan City has resulted in a Presidential Disaster Declaration for La Porte County. Site inspectors from FEMA and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) visited several of the homes listed as flood damaged by the Michigan City Emergency Management Agency in March as a preliminary step in obtaining federal assistance. “The disaster declaration will effectively mean that Michigan City residence who suffered flood damage during March will be eligible to apply for Federal assistance programs beginning tomorrow. We have received and logged more than 60 reports of flood damage to Michigan City area homes and personal property from the record breaking rains and snow melt that saturated our ground water tables this year” reported John Jones, Director of the Michigan City’s Emergency Management Agency.

Sanitary District Superintendent Al Walus reported that “the rain fall in March and the preceding snow melt from February brought ground water levels to within 1.12 feet of the surface measured at a USGS monitoring well in the Wanatah area on March 11th of this year. Previously the highest recorded ground water table was at 1.59 feet as recorded in 1989 at the same monitoring well”.

“The March 2009 flooding event (disaster number FEMA-1832-DR) differs from the last flood event that occurred in September of 2008. Disaster number FEMA-1795-DR occurred in September of 2008 after a three day torrential downpour that dumped more than 2” of rain per hour over a three day period. We had more than 400 reports of basement flooding in 2008 when the water came down so rapidly that the ground could not absorb the rain fast enough stated Jones”.

Mayor Charles Oberlie commented on the flood saying; “We know that the back to back 2008 and 2009 flood events have been trying times for those citizens who have labored during their off-work hours to clean and dry out their wet basements. I am very pleased to announce that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be opening the application process for citizens to apply for individual assistance.”

The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the State of Indiana. The assistance will supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding during the period of March 8-14, 2009.

Acting FEMA Administrator Nancy Ward said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the State of Indiana by President Obama. The president's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Allen, Carroll, DeKalb, Fulton, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Noble, Pulaski, White, and Whitley counties.

The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, 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 also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance tomorrow by registering online at <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362)

or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) Monday through Sunday until further notice. Applicants registering for aid should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves (name, permanent address, phone number), insurance coverage and any other information to help substantiate losses. Be sure to mention disaster number FEMA-1832-DR for the period of March 2009. Application procedures for local governments will be explained at a series of federal/state applicant briefings with locations to be announced in the affected area by recovery officials. Approved public repair projects are paid through the state from funding provided by FEMA and other participating federal agencies.

Local residence are encouraged to continue their clean-up efforts by pumping or wet vacuuming water from basements and following up with disinfectant efforts. “All wet items should be removed from basements. Wipe down any salvageable items with a 10% bleach solution consisting of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water and throw out any items that cannot be cleaned. In many cases carpets must be removed. Furniture and other salvageable items can be wiped down and dried in the sun. Wet masonry walls should also be wiped down and floors mopped with the bleach solution after water is removed. Dehumidifiers and fans are also useful in drying basements after water has been removed. Face masks and gloves should be worn and can be purchased locally.” advice offered from Bobbi Petru, Executive Director of the La Porte County Chapter of the American Red Cross. Residence should call the Refuse Department at 873-1530 for special pick up of trash items.