

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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EXPERTS OFFER ADVICE FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

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

On Tuesday, September 16, 2008, an Indiana Department of Homeland Security official from the State Fire and Building Safety Administration arrived in Michigan City and the greater La Porte County area to conduct a preliminary damage assessment in advance of the arrival of FEMA officials. Damage Assessment Field Operatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and the federally staffed Small Business Administration (SBA) arrived last Wednesday (September 17th) to canvass neighborhoods and assess the extent of damages from the prior weekend's storm.

Federal guidelines that determine eligibility for assistance include a threshold of 25 residences with 'major damage'. The definition of major damage according to the guidelines is considered to be residences that have 40% or more uninsured or underinsured damage. Thus, the federal, state and local Emergency Management teams that were onsite in LaPorte County last week were trying to determine if 25 or more residences had suffered major damage. The entire county is included in the effort to find the 25 major damages. Local officials believed on Monday that the quota would be met.

“Locally, we have taken more than 250 calls from the Michigan City area alone with reports of water in basements. The reports of damage are very concerning to us and we have been actively taking the reports and working with FEMA to get any relief that is available,” reported John Jones, Director of the Michigan City’s Emergency Management Agency.

“Some employee duties have been shifted at City Hall to work the phones taking reports and returning phone calls during this local emergency,” said Michigan City Mayor Chuck Oberlie. “We are conducting regular meetings to organize local efforts to respond to public infrastructure problems affecting citizens while staying in close contact with federal and state officials capable of offering some help”.

Local residents are encouraged to continue their clean-up efforts by pumping or wet vacuuming water from basements and following up with disinfection efforts. Bobbi Petru, Executive Director of the La Porte County Chapter of the American Red Cross provided the following recommendations: “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.”

Residents should call the Refuse Department at 873-1530 for special pick up of trash items.

As information is obtained from state and federal officials, the City Administration will disseminate instructions to the general public. “Citizens should monitor local media outlets for related developments,” Mayor Oberlie said. “If we are successful in obtaining a presidential disaster declaration for La Porte County, directions will follow for next steps needed for our citizens to file damage claims.”

For more information on clean up and recovery questions, the state has set up a website at www.emergency.in.gov Michigan City residents who have not filed a damage report with local Emergency Management officials are

encouraged to call (219) 873-1499; and La Porte County residents outside Michigan City can call (219) 326-6808 ext. 2264.

Reports can also be filed online with the state by going to their website at www.in.gov/dhs or by calling the Indiana State Faith Based Initiative at 1-888-335-9490. The state office is taking calls Monday through Friday from 8:30-4:30 CST.