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Five Counties Declared Major Disaster

MAY 10TH 2011 BY NEWS

Five Counties Declared Major Disaster

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. - President Barack Obama has ordered federal aid for Missouri to help the recovery from this spring's severe storms, tornadoes and flooding.

. Obama on Monday declared a major disaster in Missouri. The declaration allows federal funding for individuals in just five counties - Butler, Mississippi, New Madrid, St. Louis and Taney. The federal assistance includes grants for temporary housing, home repairs and loans for uninsured property losses. Federal funding also can be used by some government agencies and nonprofit groups for emergency work and repairs or replacements to damaged facilities.

Gov. Jay Nixon said more counties in the state may be designated as disaster areas as additional damage assessments are completed.

“I appreciate the President taking swift action on the request that I made just four days ago, so that Missouri families can more quickly recover from the severe storms, tornadoes, and record flooding that have affected parts of our state,” Nixon said. “As the flood waters recede and more damage assessments can be done, we will ask the federal government to expand this disaster declaration to provide similar vital assistance to other impacted communities and families.”

Gov. Nixon declared a state of emergency in Missouri on April 22. That order activated the State Emergency Operations Center and enabled the state to mobilize its resources - including the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the National Guard and

Highway Patrol - to assist local authorities.

Since that time, almost 800 members of the National Guard have been mobilized to provide assistance where needed; 150 Highway Patrol troopers were assigned to help with the flooding response in southern and southeast Missouri.

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Nixon Asks USDA To Begin Assessment ASAP

MAY 09TH 2011 BY NEWS

Nixon Asks USDA To Begin Assessment ASAP

Gov. Jay Nixon announced Monday that he has asked the USDA's Farm Service Agency to start damage assessments "as soon as possible" for 56 Missouri counties hit by this spring's severe storms and flooding.

The request is the first step in declaring the counties as primary disaster areas -- those where at least 30 percent of the estimated yield of a crop will be lost or where individual farmers suffer production losses of more than 30 percent. A disaster declaration would allow eligible Missouri farmers to be considered for USDA assistance.

Nixon's request includes Stoddard County and the following other counties in the ShowMe State: Barry, Barton, Bollinger, Butler, Camden, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Cedar, Christian, Crawford, Dade, Dallas, Dent, Douglas, Dunklin, Franklin, Gasconade, Greene, Hickory, Howell, Iron, Jasper, Jefferson, Laclede, Lawrence, Madison, Maries, McDonald, Miller, Mississippi, New Madrid, Newton, Oregon, Osage, Ozark, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Polk, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, St. Louis, Scott, Shannon, Stone, Taney, Texas, Vernon, Washington, Wayne, Webster and Wright.

Late last week Nixon asked the federal government to declare a disaster in several counties affected by flooding, including Stoddard County and much of Southeast Missouri. A federal disaster declaration would allow individuals and governments to get federal funds to help with flood cleanup.

Photo Above: Gov. Jay Nixon exits a Blackhawk helicopter while on a tour of flooded areas in southeast Missouri. Behind him is Maj. Gen. Stephen L. Danner, commanding general of the Missouri National Guard. (Governor's Office Photo)

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SEMO Instructor Discusses Post-Flood Soil

MAY 09TH 2011 BY NEWS

SEMO Instructor Discusses Post-Flood Soil

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo, - A professor and area agriculture expert at Southeast Missouri State University has delivered a lecture concerning the possible damage to the land in the Birds Point New Madrid Floodway.

Dr. Michael Aide, chair of the Department of Agriculture at Southeast Missouri State University, presented a special lecture on soil damage likely to occur to farms and agriculture in the Missouri Bootheel as a result of the breaching of the New Madrid spillway. The lecture was presented in an AO215 “Soils” class.

Aide presented the lecture at the request of students and transmitted via interactive television to Southeast’s regional campuses.

The 45-minute lecture is now available online from Southeast. Those interested in this recorded video may connect from any PC From any PC with a high speed connection. A spokesman for the University says the link should open Windows Media Player and play the video.

http://wmserver.cstl.semo.edu/itv/AO215_Aide_830_TR_SP11-027.wmv

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I-155 Bridge Open; Roadways Still Closed

MAY 04TH 2011 BY NEWS

I-155 Bridge Open; Roadways Still Closed

A SMT News Report

SIKESTON - The I-155 river bridge from Caruthersville to Dyersburg, Tenn., has reopened after being hit by a barge on Tuesday.

The Missouri Department of Transportation reported the bridge was inspected after Tuesday's incident and is now open.

Water covered Highway 51 at the Route 60 overpass Tuesday afternoon, despite efforts by crews to keep the road open.

Other roadways closed in Stoddard County include:

- Route 51 - from two miles north of Puxico to Route C (Bollinger County)
- Route 60 - Westbound traffic diverted to east bound lanes from Route N to Route 114
- Ramp from US 60 east to Route 51 at Fisk
- Route 91 - from Route P to Route CC (Scott County)
- Route A - from Route E to MO153
- Route AE- from CRD 497 to Route 51
- Route BB - from Route C to Route M

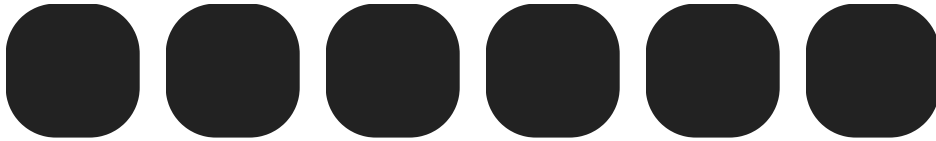
- Route D - CRD 751 to CRD 765
- Route E - from Route FF to Route N
- Route MM - from Route U to Route 102 (Dunklin County)
- Route O - from Route 25 to Route P
- Route T - Route 51 to Route D(Wayne Co.)
- Route Y - from Route AB to Route Z

{BR}Photo Above: MoDOT crews and volunteers worked Monday afternoon to try and keep flood waters from covering Highway 51 near the Highway 60 overpass in Stoddard County. The water continued to flow, and the highway was closed later in the day.

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Corps To Blast Levee Late Monday Night

MAY 02ND 2011 BY NEWS

[Corps To Blast Levee Late Monday Night](#)

By Annabeth Miller, ShowMe Times Editor

BIRDS POINT, Mo. - After a long and rainy day Monday, the Army Corps of Engineers announced it would finally happen. What everyone fighting and watching the Mississippi River flood this spring had been talking about – the Corps would blast a hole in the levee between Birds Point and New Madrid.

Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh announced late Monday afternoon on the levee near Birds Point that he issued the order to activate the floodway and blow three holes in the more than 30 miles of levee system. The first blast will be a three-mile wide breach at the northern end of the system near Birds Point.

“I’ve ordered the district commander to operate the project,” Walsh said in a matter-of-fact tone.

Walsh made his announcement on top the rain-drenched levee within sight of the “old” Mississippi River bridge near Cairo. A gaggle of media was on hand – metro television stations, national networks and news services, large daily newspapers – and local news journals, radio and television. The Corps inflated a bright yellow tent at an intersection Highway 60/62 and a county road so officials and media could escape the constant rain for the news event.

“Everyone I have talked with -- from boat operators, to laborers, scientists and engineers, and truck drivers have all said the same thing – ‘I never thought I would see the day that the river would reach these levels,’” Walsh said. He called this spring’s floods an “historic chocolate tide.”

Walsh said the Corps will blast the first of three holes in the levee between 9 p.m. Monday night and 12 midnight Tuesday morning.

He said he would prefer to blow the levee during the daylight but said they must detonate the explosives as soon as possible due to the weakening levee system. Walsh said the levee system needs relief as soon as possible from “enormous, unprecedented” pressure.

Walsh gave the order to activate the floodway to the Col. Vernie Reichling, commander of the Corps’ Memphis district. Reichling said crews began work on loading blasting agent into the pipes in the levee over the weekend. Crews were pulled from the work Sunday evening due to storms.

“You’re not going to see a

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huge explosion,” said Reichling. “What you’re going to see is basically designed to uplift the levee and break it. The levee is designed with heavy clays; it is a very impenetrable structure. This explosive material was specifically designed to penetrate and loosen that up.”

For days the Corps has been trying to manage the flooding and to decide if activation of the flood plan originally written in 1928 should be activated. The only other time the flood plan has been activated was in the 1938 flood.

The multi-step plan will blow three holes in the levee system in Southeast Missouri, flooding more than 133,000 acres of prime agriculture land, destroying more than 100 homes and virtually destroying a way of life.

Local officials in Mississippi County as well as the Missouri National Guard have worked since the weekend to prepare residents of the region for evacuation. The Guard announced that they have completed evacuation the residents of the region, and only “had to escort” one individual from the area Monday afternoon.

"This doesn't end this historic flood," Walsh said. "This is just the beginning. This is just one floodway."

Photos Above: (top) Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh announced Monday afternoon he had issued the order to activate the Birds Point New Madrid Floodway late Monday night. (bottom) Vernie Reichling explains about the blasting of a plug in the levee at Birds Point as U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson listens.

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