

Governor Quinn Urges People to Stay Out Of Flooded Areas until Deemed Safe

Written by Laurel White
Monday, 09 May 2011 12:40

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Robust State Response Supports Local Flood Efforts

SPRINGFIELD – May 4, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today urged people who have evacuated from flooded communities to heed instruction from public officials about returning to their homes. Ten communities have issued voluntary evacuation orders, while the city of Cairo called for a mandatory evacuation as river levels in the area began climbing to new record highs.

“We’ve seen water levels drop in some areas following the Army Corps of Engineers’ action Monday evening, but we’re not out of the woods yet,” said Governor Quinn. “These are very difficult times for people who were forced from their homes. But it’s very important that everyone follow instructions from public officials, who are working day and night to protect lives during this dangerous situation.”

On Monday, Governor Quinn traveled to Cairo, where he met with local officials working to save the town of nearly 3,000 from record-breaking flood levels on the Ohio River. Governor Quinn first traveled to southern Illinois on April 28 to visit the devastated community of Olive Branch.

Governor Quinn said the state last week implemented a robust response to flooding in southern Illinois. Hundreds of state personnel, Illinois National Guard troops and correctional inmates have been involved in efforts to bolster strained levees, assist local officials and ensure public safety.

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Highlights of the state's response to date include:

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

- Coordinating state's flood response through 24-hour operation of the State Emergency Operations Center in Springfield, the Unified Area Command post in Marion, and an Incident Command post in Alexander County.
- Providing equipment, including nearly 200 portable radios, two mobile command vehicles, two portable communications suites, a supply trailer, equipment to reinforce emergency communications and a mobile fuel tank to support Illinois National Guard operations.

Illinois National Guard

- Nearly 450 troops have been deployed to various locations throughout southern Illinois to assist with sandbagging, levee patrol, traffic control, welfare checks and more.
- An Illinois National Guard Chinook helicopter was used to move and position more than 2,500 sandbags on a levee in Murphysboro.

Illinois Department of Corrections

- Working around the clock, inmates at the Tamms, DuQuoin, Dixon Springs, Hardin and

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Vienna facilities have already filled more than 475,000 sandbags for sandbagging operations in seven counties.

- Inmate crews have filled thousands of sandbags in several counties since April 25. On Wednesday, nearly 100 inmates are assisting with sandbagging in three counties.

- Inmates are washing laundry for Illinois National Guard troops deployed for flooding, while others have assisted with moving files and equipment from flood-threatened state offices in Cairo and Metropolis.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

- Continual updates from IDNR's water resource experts on flood projections and levee conditions are critical to planning and response efforts.
- Nearly 50 conservation officers and 25 fishery biologists with 50 boats have been deployed to perform levee patrols, welfare checks and delivery of bottled water. DNR personnel have performed more than 450 evacuations and rescues in the affected areas.
- Teams also have transported utility workers to shut off utilities and assisted the U.S. Postal Service with mail deliveries in areas inaccessible due to floodwaters.

Illinois Department of Public Health

- Deployed a nine-member Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team (IMERT) to handle medical needs at the American Red Cross shelters.
- Coordinating with local health departments in southern Illinois to ensure they have an adequate supply of tetanus shots.

Central Management Services

- Locating, procuring and ensuring delivery of needed supplies, such as sandbags,

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plastic, pumps, generators, drinking water, shovels and more.

- Supported relocation of critical files and electronic equipment from state offices in Cairo and Metropolis.

Illinois Department of Transportation

- IDOT personnel have delivered more than 2 million sandbags, along with delivery of sand, plastic, water, pumps, hoses and other needed supplies.
- Supporting road closures and traffic control efforts in flood-impacted areas.
- More than 8,600 staff hours and 7,900 equipment hours already have been dedicated to the flood response.

Illinois State Police

- Conducting two flights a day to assess levees and bridges in the affected area.
- Assisting local officials with evacuations, security and other law enforcement services.
- Controlling access over the 60/62 bridge into Missouri

American Red Cross

- Operating seven shelters for people displaced by the floods. More than 200 people stayed at the shelters Tuesday night.
- To date, more than 13,000 meals and snacks have been provided to people and responders.

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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- Monitoring public water supplies and wastewater treatment facilities in the affected area for impacts on operations.
- Monitoring for potential hazardous materials releases.
- Preparing for potential post-flood environmental issues.

Illinois Commerce Commission

- Coordinating with utility companies in the affected area to maintain awareness of power outages and related issues.
- Working with utilities on power restoration plans.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

- Continually assessing readiness of fire departments in the affected area.

Illinois Department of Agriculture

- Arranging for potential sheltering needs for pets of people evacuated from their homes.

Illinois Department on Aging

- Coordinating with local Area Agencies on Aging on flood-related issues.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)

- The state's fire service mutual aid organization has deployed 17 light towers, six decontamination trailers (shower facilities), and two "tent cities" that are accommodating more than 200 Illinois National Guard troops and 60 Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) personnel in Marion.

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- Deployed trailer to support Unified Area Command.

Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS)

- The state's law enforcement mutual aid organization is supplementing local law enforcement in several counties 64 officers.
- Providing security at shelters as needed.

Illinois Emergency Services Management Agency (IESMA)

- The state's emergency management mutual aid organization has provided more than 30 emergency managers to assist local emergency management agencies with planning, logistics and evacuations.

Illinois Telecommunicator Emergency Response Task Force (IL-TERT)

- Two three-person teams are assisting with logistical communications in the Unified Area Command during this first-ever activation of the state's telecommunicator mutual aid organization. Additional personnel are prepared to rotate into service later this week.

More information about the state's flood response and flood safety is available on the Ready Illinois website at www.Ready.Illinois.gov .

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