

# **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**Wednesday, June 28, 2017**

**2:00 p.m.**

## **Isabella County Emergency Management Submits Preliminary Damage Assessment Report**

Good Afternoon. My name is Margaret McAvoy and I am the Isabella County Administrator/Controller. I am here today as the County Public Information Officer for this incident.

I am joined at the podium by the Isabella County Sheriff Michael Main, and Marc Griffis, the Emergency Manager and Central Dispatch 911 Director.

Isabella County Emergency Management in cooperation with our municipal partners provide this update on our response activities to the June 23, 2017 devastating floods. There has been an extraordinary extensive response to the disaster by community partner representatives who have been staffing the Emergency Operations Center since 7:00 a.m. June 23, 2017. On Friday, June 23, 2017 the Board of Commissioners Board Chairman, George Green, declared a local state of emergency. At 10:00 pm on Friday, Governor Rick Snyder's office declared an emergency/disaster for Isabella County. This declaration has allowed for State assistance and resources to be deployed to the County to begin the recovery process in cooperation with Charter Township of Union, City of Mt. Pleasant, Central Michigan University and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. At this time, I would like to introduce representatives of these vital partners;

State Representative Roger Hauck

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**Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe:**

Emergency Manager, Fred Cantu

Public Information Officer, Erik Rodriguez

Police Chief, Donielle Bannon

**City of Mt. Pleasant:**

City Manager, Nancy Ridley

Chief of Public Safety, Paul Lauria

Fire Chief, Rick Belinick

Assistant Fire Chief, Mike Dunham

Lt. Randy Keeler

**Charter Township of Union:**

Township Manager, Mark Stuhldreher

Many community organizations have joined with our municipal partners to assure a swift and coordinated response to the initial needs of our citizens who were negatively impacted by the flood. The Emergency Operations Center initiated a damage assessment hotline for the public to report property damage. For those who still wish to report, the number is 989-779-1452. The call center initially was operating 24 hours a day, and has received over 900 calls by 8:00 a.m. this morning. As of today, the damage assessment call center will be open and staffed from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and the public is encouraged to continue to call and report flood damage.

In response to those residents who needed shelter, the American Red Cross opened a shelter at the Mt. Pleasant High School which closed as of 4:00 p.m. yesterday.

Should any citizen need shelter assistance or other general information they should call 211 and operators will assist them.

The American Red Cross will also be deploying to our community an emergency response vehicle which will be distributing disaster relief supplies. This vehicle will be clearly marked as the American Red Cross Emergency Response vehicle. This is a legitimate resource and the public should feel comfortable utilizing it. The American Red Cross will be making their best effort to reach as many flood damaged residences as possible. The American Red Cross in cooperation with the United Way has started a fund for those individuals who would like to provide a monetary donation to the Red Cross to assist local families with flood related issues. Please text the word ISABELLA (all caps) to 41444.

The Isabella County Habitat for Humanity will accept household donations for those affected by the flood at their Restore located at 201 East Pickard Street, Mt. Pleasant, MI. Donors must indicate that their donations are for flood victims.

Central Michigan District Health Department cautions the public that flood waters, pooling water, and those items which have been damaged by the flood waters may be contaminated. Please use extreme caution. The Health Department has information on their website regarding well testing kits, guidance for swimming pools, and information regarding dealing with mold. Please go to [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org) for more information regarding public health questions.

We are aware that residents have flood related refuse to dispose of. If you are a resident of the City of Mt. Pleasant, please refer to their Facebook page, or website at [www.mt-pleasant.org](http://www.mt-pleasant.org), for refuse collection information. If you are an out-

County resident, including a resident of Union Township, the Granger Disposal Center of Alma will be open with extended hours June 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup> from 7:00 a.m. – 12 noon. The disposal center will only accept storm damaged materials from households. Any resident from Isabella County, including City residents, are welcome to dispose of their damaged household materials at this center. For more information, please visit [www.grangernet.com/disposal-center-alma](http://www.grangernet.com/disposal-center-alma). If a resident is a contracted customer of Waste Management please proceed with your regularly scheduled pick up. If a customer has excess refuse, please call the Waste Management call center at 866-797-9018 to arrange pick up.

Citizens have reported that there are persons in our community who are identifying themselves as FEMA representatives and asking for donations. Please be informed FEMA has not deployed any employees or representatives to Isabella County. However, under no circumstance, will FEMA employees or representatives be asking for donations. We also understand that there are individuals misrepresenting themselves as contractors who are asking for financial deposits prior to providing restoration and/or recovery estimates. Neither of these are legitimate, please do not give them money. Should you be approached by these individuals please call 911 so law enforcement may respond.

Isabella County Emergency Management has submitted a preliminary damage assessment as required by the Governor's declaration. This report will be continually updated as new data is collected and is effective today at noon. The preliminary report is included in the document available to the press and preliminary highlights include:

1. Private property accumulative damages total \$39,109,285. This includes homes, businesses, and non-profit organizations.
2. Public property accumulative damages total \$26,994,067. This includes preliminary damage reports from the City of Mt. Pleasant, Isabella County Road Commission, the Village of Lake Isabella, Union Township, Isabella County Drain Commission, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Central Michigan University, McLaren Central Michigan, Mt. Pleasant Public Schools, Shepherd Public Schools, Isabella County Community Mental Health and Michigan State Police.
3. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates a substantial loss of crops financially impacting farmers and the agricultural economy totaling \$21,142,250.

The County wishes to emphasize that these figures represent the preliminary damage assessment report and will be updated as information is received.

The City of Mt. Pleasant received significant damage to their parks and recreational facilities. Please refer to the City of Mt. Pleasant's Facebook page or website for specifics regarding closures. The Isabella County Parks and Recreation Department will continue to have all river launches closed until further notice. Also, the Deerfield Park campground is closed effective immediately until further notice.

As we enter the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, the Emergency Management Department reminds citizens of the following cautions, the Chippewa River remains a public safety and health concern and we advise that people stay off the river. This is for

public safety concerns and possible contamination due to flood waters. E.coli levels are being evaluated.

Please remember that multiple roads and trails in Isabella County are closed and barricaded. Please do not remove the barricades or drive around them. Also, please be aware that there are spontaneous sink holes occurring. Please drive with caution. We want the public to enjoy their holiday weekend and caution them to keep safety first. Avoid standing water, do not recreate in the river, use caution when driving because many roads are compromised, and do not drink and drive.

The Emergency Operations Center remains open and fully staffed. We will continue to respond to this disaster and together with our partners and community we will recover. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to support you.

Margaret A. McAvoy

Isabella County Administrator/Controller

Public Information Officer