

## **Press Release**

For immediate release

**Richland County Emergency Management**

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### **Presidential Disaster Declaration for Richland County**

Darin Gudgeon, Richland County Emergency Management Director, announced that on Sunday President Bush officially made a disaster declaration for Richland County. Four other counties were included in the declaration including Crawford, La Crosse, Sauk, and Vernon.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been charged with administering assistance to individuals and businesses under the Presidential Disaster Declaration. FEMA teams will set up a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in Richland County. All individuals suffering from damage related to the flooding that occurred on August 18<sup>th</sup> will need to register with FEMA regardless if you filled out a County Damage Assessment form or not. Funding will become available to registered qualified individuals through FEMA based on their criteria and time tables. The assistance can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs, and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

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

FEMA Public Assistance teams will begin assessing public sector damage (roads, streets and bridges) in Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk and Vernon counties tomorrow. Richland County Emergency Management continues working with FEMA officials through the recovery phase of this disaster. For flood questions, you may reach Richland County Emergency Management at (608) 647-8187. For public health questions or concerns, you may reach Richland County Public Health at (608) 647-8821. A Crisis Counseling Hotline has also been established, you may contact Richland County Health & Human Services at (608) 647-6384.

An additional three inches of rain fell this morning in some areas of Richland County

causing road damage. County officials are assessing the situation. Richland County Emergency Management has announced that the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) will remain open from 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday. The Volunteer Station located at the Kilian Meyer Building in Krouskop Park will remain open from 10am to 4pm through Wednesday. The Salvation Army and other volunteer organizations will use the Richland Center Armory to house volunteers and store donated goods starting today. The shelter remains closed at this time.

Crawford and Richland Counties will be serviced by a Red Cross Reception Center at North Crawford County High School, Soldiers Grove, which is open 9 a.m. to 7p.m. Client casework/outreach will also emanate from North Crawford High School for Crawford and Richland Counties.

Reception Centers offer snacks and beverages along with clean up kits, comfort kits, client case work and information and referrals. Assistance may include payment for groceries, new clothing, and rent, as well as funds for emergency home repairs, transportation, household items, medicines, and tools. Individuals or families who apply for assistance must provide identification and address as proof that they live in the affected area.

The Richland Center Goodwill Donation Center is still accepting donations of clothing, furniture, household items, non-perishable food, and personal hygiene items. Free vouchers to Goodwill Stores, as well as any non-perishable food or personal hygiene items that are donated, will be distributed to flood victims through the Volunteer Station. The free Goodwill vouchers are also available at the Aging & Disability Resource Center. Contact 647-4616 for more information.

Submitted: 8/27/07 @ 3pm