



Flood Relief Efforts Underway

JEFFERSON CITY — It has been a tough time for many residents of St. Charles and Lincoln counties and anyone who resides in areas near the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers in our part of the state. With the river levels rising and several levees in the area compromised or breached, many homeowners, businesses and farmers in those areas are grappling with the aftermath of some of the worst flooding in years.

The governor visited St. Charles on Friday and declared a state emergency for the area. The declaration activates the state's emergency operations center and authorizes state departments to assist however needed. The Highway Patrol, Water Patrol, the Missouri National Guard, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health and Senior Services, Department of Conservation and the Department of Transportation are all working to assist with flooding. My office has been helping to coordinate efforts and will remain in constant contact with the governor and state agencies as this situation unfolds.

The city of St. Charles, with its unique distinction of being bordered by both rivers, was flooded by breaches in the Elm Point Levee. Floodwaters from the swollen Mississippi River have rolled into farmlands, industrial areas and some residential neighborhoods, so far mostly in the northern part of the county. Fortunately, the Missouri River hasn't matched the velocity of the Mississippi River this time as it did during the Great Flood of 1993.

For anyone displaced by floodwaters in St. Charles County, an emergency shelter has been set up at the First United Methodist Church in St. Charles city at 801 First Capitol Drive. For information, call 636-947-9380.

In Lincoln County, the communities of Foley and Winfield along the Mississippi River have been among the hardest hit, with the city of Foley under a voluntary evacuation. Several thousand acres of farmland in the area are under water and emergency response officials are urging any residents threatened by floodwater to leave the area. A shelter has been set up for area residents at Winfield Senior High School.

According to the St. Charles County Division of Emergency Management, our area remains in a holding pattern over the next few days. I'm told officials will be keeping a close eye on the Grafton river stages, which are predicted to rise to 30 feet, and levees will continue to be monitored to see if they can withstand the impact from flooding. We are cautiously optimistic the situation won't become worse.

By virtue of living near these mighty waters, the people of St. Charles and Lincoln counties are no strangers to flooding and have become seasoned pros at responding when Mother Nature strikes in this devastating way. I am grateful and most pleased at the quick and efficient response and well-coordinated efforts of the local emergency management agencies, city and county officials, and other local and state organizations involved in ensuring the well-being and safety of our residents. I also want to thank area residents who have helped the Missouri National Guard and others with sandbagging efforts and other relief efforts.

Anyone who needs resource referrals or non-emergency help, please call 211. Also, anyone looking for volunteers can contact 211 or call 800-427-4626.

As we await the final assessment of yet another round of flooding this year, I am confident our communities will continue to successfully work together to cleanup and recover from this flooding catastrophe. Let's hope the rest of the year is uneventful weather-wise.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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