



READY RACINE

WINTER 2020

Volume 15, Issue 1

Racine County
Office
of
Emergency Management

Inside this issue:

Lakeshore Flooding	2
TAW 2020	2
Declaration Process	3
Cyber Security	3
News Briefs	4
EPCRA	4

Mission

To assist the community in mitigating known hazards and in preparing for, responding to, surviving and recovering from both natural and man-made disasters.

RACINE'S LAKESHORE POUNDED



Local, state and federal officials survey damage along Pershing Drive

On January 10th, the National Weather Service issues a Lakeshore Flood Advisory for Racine County.

As a precaution, Pershing Drive and the Christopher Columbus Causeway were closed due to concerns about hazardous conditions. As forecasted, high winds resulted in waves pounding the lakeshore. The most intense winds came on Saturday and were out of the northeast at 50-60mph. Wind gusts in Racine were recorded at 58 mph.

As City of Racine officials surveyed the damage, there were numerous issues along 2.5 miles of the lakeshore, stretching from Carre-Hogle Park to Shoop Park.

Racine County Emergency Management (RCOEM) worked closely with city officials to assess the damage and at the recommendation of RCOEM, Mayor Cory Mason issued an emergency declaration

on January 15th, 2020. County Executive Jonathan Delagrave followed suit on January 17, 2020, issuing a similar declaration.

Officials in Kenosha and Milwaukee counties reported similar issues and it soon became apparent that reported damages



LAKESHORE FLOODING CONT.

in all three counties may reach the threshold necessary to request a Presidential Disaster Declaration. The next step in the process would be to request that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) in all three counties.

On Tuesday, February 4th, FEMA conducted a PDA in Racine. Local, state and federal officials gathered at City Hall to review the damages identified during earlier assessments. During the project review, Village of Wind Point and City of Racine officials explained the projects that were identified and justified the numbers. Afterwards, site visits were made to Pershing Park Drive, Sam Meyers Parkway, Shoop Park and North Beach.

Although Racine County identified over \$6 million in damages, FEMA only “validated” \$2.6 million through the PDA process. However, these validated damages from the PDA are not the final when it comes to what is eligible or not eligible for the FEMA Public Assistance program.

Because Racine, Kenosha and Milwaukee counties, combined, met the

state threshold, Gov. Tony Evers has submitted a request for a federal disaster declaration for the three southeastern Wisconsin counties damaged by severe winter storms that occurred Jan. 10-12. The request, made in a letter Monday to President Donald Trump, could make Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties eligible for federal disaster assistance to repair damage to public infrastructure along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

“Large waves and shoreline flooding across southeastern Wisconsin badly damaged infrastructure that helps protect communities and enhances the valuable natural resource that is Lake Michigan,” Gov. Evers said. “Federal disaster assistance would

help ensure those areas can be repaired quickly and restored to what they looked like before the storms.”

If approved, FEMA’s Public Assistance Program would help communities recover some of the eligible costs incurred including public infrastructure repair and debris cleanup from the storms. FEMA provides 75 percent of eligible costs. The state of Wisconsin and local communities impacted share the remaining 25 percent. The program is not for businesses or homeowners as the level of damage in these areas, unfortunately, does not currently meet requirements for federal disaster relief.



TORNADO & SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK 2020

Racine County will be observing **Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week from April 13 to 17** and the statewide tornado drill will occur on Thursday, April 16, 2020. This year there will be two drills, the first at 1:45 pm and the second at 6:45 pm.

Wisconsin averages 23 tornadoes annually. During the 2019 season, the National Weather Service (NWS) con-

firmed 28 tornadoes touched down in the state of Wisconsin. Of those, 18 occurred during a three-day period in late July, downing countless trees and damaging homes and other buildings across the central portion of the state. While Racine County had no tornado warnings last year, a microburst uprooted trees on Racine’s northside on July 2nd.

Racine County has had its share of tornadoes. Since 1844, the county has had 26 tornadoes and the 1888 tornado, which hit the northside of the City of Racine, still lists as one of the top 10 killer tornadoes in state history. In addition, record flooding on the Fox River in 2017 resulted in millions of dollars in damages and since 1990, Racine County has had 10 Disaster Declarations.

HOW THE DECLARATION PROCESS COMES TOGETHER

Recently Gov. Tony Evers submitted a request for a federal disaster declaration for the three southeastern Wisconsin counties damaged by severe winter storms that occurred Jan. 10-12.

58 mph winds on that Saturday resulted in waves pounding the lakeshore. In the aftermath, the damage was extensive! From Carre-Hogle Park to the Wind Point Lighthouse, breakwaters were damaged, drainage systems were compromised and there was a massive failure of an engineered embankment.

On Monday morning, the city of Racine reached out to my office. I asked them to compile a list of damages and estimated costs and to have the Mayor issue an emergency declaration. I worked closely with the Mayor's office on the declaration and with the Public Works Department to compile the damage assessment.

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) requires that we submit a Uniform Disaster Situation Report within 72 hours. This is often difficult to compile in that short timeframe for a number of reasons. Depending on the situation, you may still be compiling damage reports and often it is hard to estimate the financial impact from those damages. However, you do the best you can to provide a snapshot of the damage.

As we began looking at the extent of damage, it became apparent that between Racine, Kenosha and Milwaukee counties, we might hit the state threshold to request a Presidential Disaster Declaration. Each county had a minimum threshold to meet. That would be \$3.84 x the county's 2010 Census. The state, in turn, must meet a minimum threshold of \$1.53 x state's 2010 Census or about \$8.8 million in damages.

Total estimates came in at over \$30 million so WEM requested that FE-

MA conduct a PDA to validate the costs identified. This was conducted over several days and involved site visits to damaged areas. Ironically, the day we conducted our site visit, the National Weather Service had issued another Lakeshore Flood Advisory and the winds were coming off of the lake.

Once FEMA validated the costs associated with the various repair "projects", WEM reviewed the information and based on meeting the threshold, recommended that the Governor submit a request for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. That request must be made within 30 days of the incident period.

The approval process could take as little as two weeks or as long as two months but if approved, local municipalities would be eligible to seek reimbursement for repairs. However, FEMA will only cover expenses to restore something to its pre-existing condition.

CYBER SECURITY-WE ARE ALL VULNERABLE

This past January, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) sponsored a series of regional workshops focused on cyber security and recently, the city of Racine was the victim of a cyber attack that shut-down their IT network. While their system was backed up, it is still a long process to rebuild.

While we are all vulnerable to attack, there are steps that we can all take. First, we need to be vigilant! If you have not done so, take training in cyber security. Racine County is requiring all employees to take Security

and Privacy Awareness Training.

Second, don't take the bait. Scammers attempt to "phish" by sending an email message attempting to trick you into revealing personal information that.

Phishing emails may seem legitimate at first glance. But look for spelling & grammar mistakes, an urgency to act and confidential requests. Always check the senders email address. While the email may seem official, the email address is often different than what it appears to be.

Finally follow these safe practices:

DO NOT click on links that seem suspicious

DO NOT open any attachments that are not expected

DO NOT open any encrypted emails that are not expected

DO NOT provide any confidential information over email

While you may not prevent an attack from occurring, you can take steps to minimize potential loss by being proactive instead of reactive.

NEWS BRIEFS

SPOTTER SEMINAR

Learn all you can about tornadoes and severe weather by attending our Severe Weather Safety and Storm Spotting Seminar on Monday, March 30th from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at SC Johnson iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Boulevard, Sturtevant, WI 53177. The training will be conducted by Tim Halbach, Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) for the National Weather Service (NWS) at the Milwaukee/Sullivan office. The seminar is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required! To register go to

<https://2020severeweatherseminar.eventbrite.com>

TOP 10 WISCONSIN WEATHER EVENTS (2010-2019)

Our friends at the National Weather Service's Milwaukee/Sullivan Forecast Office put together their list of Top 10 Weather Events over the past decade. Four out of the ten events affected Racine County.

- Groundhog's Day Blizzard 2011
- April 2011 Tornado Outbreak-Merrill
- Record Hot March/July 2012
- Winter 2013/2014 Cold
- July 2016 Northwoods Flooding
- May 2017 Long Track Tornado-Chetek
- April 2018 Blizzard
- Aug/Sep 2018 Severe Weather
- July 2019 Blowdown

- Wettest Decade

You can find out more by visiting the National Weather Service website at: <https://www.weather.gov/mkx/>.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

If your group needs a speaker for an upcoming event, please contact us. We can speak on a variety of topics from Emergency Management 101 to Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse. We'd enjoy meeting you and sharing about emergency preparedness. For more information, contact us at 262.636.3515.



EMERGENCY PLANNING & COMMUNITY RIGHT TO KNOW

In 1984, a deadly release of methyl isocyanate in Bhopal, India and a near miss in Institute, West Virginia in 1986, prompted Congress to pass the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know-Act (EPCRA) of 1986. EPCRA was created to help communities plan for chemical emergencies.

Facilities which use, store or produce hazardous chemicals in certain quan-

ties must make an annual report to its local fire department, the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the State Emergency Response Commission.

Those reports are due each March 1st and in Racine County, there are 164 Reporting Facilities and 71 Planning Facilities. That information is then used to develop hazardous material response plans including off site fa-

cility plans for facilities that use, store or produce extremely hazardous substances like chlorine, anhydrous ammonia and sulfuric acid.



STAY INFORMED

There are a number of ways in which you can stay informed and involved with Racine County Emergency Management. In addition to our quarterly Ready Racine newsletters, you can learn more about RCOEM by:

- Visiting our website: <http://readyracineco.com>
- Download the Ready Badger App: <http://appfactoryuwp.com/projects.php>
- Visiting our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/readyracineco
- Submitting your questions and concerns to rcemergencymanagement@racinecounty.com
- Volunteering with Racine County Emergency Management