

Governor Desantis (00:05):

Well, good afternoon. I'm joined here by our DEA Secretary Dane Eagle Lee County Property appraiser, Matt Caldwell, Lee County Tax Collector, Noel Noel Branding. Lee County Sheriff Carmine Marcino representatives Botana. And does Gio Lombardo here? I didn't see him. No. Not Marty Harty from Doc Fords. I mean, you see this debris, behind, I mean, there's obviously a lot. They're making good progress. I mean, I'm impressed with what I see, but there's obviously a lot of work ahead and we know that there were a lot of folks that that suffered personal damage. Obviously, we saw a lot of damage with some of the bridges and we're very happy that we were able to get people back on sandal across that causeway yesterday. You have done that in three weeks, I think is really, really good. It ran the risk if that was something people thought was going to be months that I think the island would've just kind of toiled and decay.

Governor Desantis (01:02):

That's just the inertia of it. Now you've had a lot of people working on search and rescue immediately power all that stuff very quickly. Now it's just everybody can get in there and do what they need to do. So we're really happy to have been here for that. And I want to thank everybody that's been involved in it. We also understand that there were significant damage to people's homes and businesses. And we want to make sure that we're doing all we can to clear the burdens that folks are dealing with when it comes to recovering from this storm. There's certain things, you know, the debris is there. We can't get that. We can't put that back together. Pretend that didn't happen. But we can make it, make it as easy as possible for people to get back on their feet.

Governor Desantis (01:45):

So today I'm announcing that we're signing an executive order to extend deadlines for payments of property taxes in the FEMA counties that were designated for damage based on Hurricane Ian. This includes real property, personal homes, commercial businesses, that were destroyed or otherwise rendered uninhabitable. So it'll be the 26 counties that have been approved for individual assistance. So I do not have the ability as governor to eliminate property tax obligations. So this will delay that payment dates. And the reason why we're doing that is we want to give us time so that the legislature can come in sometime after the election, but before the end of the year and provide rebates for the affected homeowners or property owners. And I've already spoke with incoming president of the Florida Senate, Kathleen PAs Adomo, as well as the incoming house speaker, Paul Renter.

Governor Desantis (02:45):

They are eager to come back to be able to make this relief permanent for the victims of Hurricane Ian, particularly those who had a total loss of their home or of their business. And so we will have, have a formal announcement very soon on the exact dates. But because this is going to be necessary, we are going to have the legislature come back before the end of the year for a special legislative session. And one of the purposes of that legislative session will be to address these tax obligations and to make sure that the homeowners and the business owners can get rebate on the property tax. We actually just passed a bill recently that, where that's the norm, it just doesn't kick in until January 1st. So we're gonna make that retroactive. We're going to make sure that relief is there.

Governor Desantis (03:37):

We also will, in the special session, consider if necessary any additional appropriations to help communities that have been affected, particularly here in southwest Florida. And we'll see what those

needs would be. I mean, one thing could be if you're giving property tax rebates to taxpayers property owners, you know, that's great for them. But obviously that revenue funds essential services. So there may be a need for us to help with a local fire department or something. And all that stuff, you know, will be on the table and we can work through whatever may be needed to do that. I mean, if you notice what we've done with these bridges, you know, that was those, that was money that the state did as part of an emergency. This will allow us to maybe appropriate specifically to meet some needs that we have going on.

Governor Desantis ([04:25](#)):

We also, and I've spoken, got approval, or I've got agreement from both leaders to do additional things for homeowners insurance. We did a legislative session in May. You know, there were some very positive reforms that were done. But there were also things that we wanted to do that the legislature at that time was not willing to do. I think we will be able to do that in this special session. I think both of those leaders are very ready, willing, and able to get this on a stable footing. You know, we have, Biden inflation is raging, you know, costs way more to replace a roof today than it did just three years ago. So we need to do everything we can to push back on that and fight for a more competitive market where rates are incentivized to go down.

Governor Desantis ([05:13](#)):

So we will do that, and I think that that will be something that's very, very important as well. So there's a lot that's going on right now. A lot of changes in people's lives. The last thing I think we want is, you know, someone loses their home and then they are getting hit up for property taxes on a home that doesn't exist anymore. So today's effort is the first step in making sure that that won't happen. The special session that we'll do between now and the end of the year with the legislature, and those dates will be forthcoming. We'll be able to make that relief permanent, so it will give people peace of mind. We're going to continue to work hard. We've got some additional items that we're working on in my office. And I know the folks down here have been working with Kevin Guthrie on additional needs.

Governor Desantis ([05:58](#)):

And so, we're going to be having probably some pretty good announcements. I think we'll be ready for roll out some more policy relief both tomorrow and hopefully Saturday or definitely, tomorrow. Yeah, I think we'll do Saturday as well. So we want to just keep it coming. And so stay tuned on that. I want to thank everybody who's been working on these efforts. I do want to thank the first lady. You know, the disaster fund, I think had 46 million that she's done. So that's a huge amount of money. A lot of people want to be supportive. We know that there's going to be additional folks that are coming in really big for that. And there's already been millions of dollars obligated provided to groups, helping people. But there's going to be many more in the days ahead. Okay. We'll start with DEO Secretary Dane Eagle.

Secretary Dane Eagle ([06:49](#)):

Well, just a week ago, the governor called for a round table with local businesses around the community to hear their concerns. And, Marty Harty here with Doc Fords was one of those individuals and raised the concern about property taxes. And here we are, a week later, the governor acting with an executive order to delay that. So that's, we're acting quickly thanks to the governor's leadership, we're going to continue to act on those concerns and see what else we can be doing. But thank you to Marty Harty for all you're doing to help lead the business community. We got Rep botany here as well. We just did a walkthrough. Marty says, if government can, you know, get out of the way, let's get debris clear. Let's

get power up. Let's get the bridges open, which the governor is helping lean the charge on, and we could help Marty with other things.

Secretary Dane Eagle ([07:27](#)):

He's hoping to serve Thanksgiving dinner here in this restaurant behind us. Now. That's, that's, that's incredible. That's incredible. So thank you Marty and rep Botana wants put his up his marina next week. So we are going to continue with the governor's leadership to help these businesses do that. Cut the red tape, make sure they're opening, serving our community, and then paying their employees. We do realize a lot of people are out of work. Through no fault of their own. The governor's cut red tape disaster, unemployment assistance is available. We realize people don't necessarily want to be on that. They want to work. So the sooner Marty can open, the sooner they can get back to work. We also have dislocated workers grants, so if they don't want to do disaster unemployment assistance, they can go back to work in the community and get paid to do so.

Secretary Dane Eagle ([08:08](#)):

But these are all the results of the governor listening and acting, and that's incredible. We also held a popup Disaster Recovery Center for businesses yesterday. You know, we have the permanent ones, two in Lee, one in Collier, one in Charlotte, one in Sarasota. But we still went up yesterday for businesses. We served about a hundred businesses, a third of them were in the marine fish fisheries community. We realize that their hardest hit and we want to help, and we're going to continue to focus on that. And the last thing I'll mention is the governors that done a call to action for Congress long-term recovery, we're doing short term recovery right now. We want to get businesses operating, but bridges, water, sewer, there's going to be needs years to come. We work with Congress and HUD to do that for infrastructure. The governor announced last Monday, 126 million for the panhandle four years after Hurricane Michael. We've been doing that year after year after year. Well, we want to be back a year from now, not two years from now. So we're going to continue to call on Congress, and I know the local representatives are certainly eager to act to make sure that we can hopefully announce some awards a year from now and not two years from now. So we'll be continuing to work on that thanks to the governor's leadership and thanks to local business community for their efforts.

Governor Desantis ([09:16](#)):

Okay. Matt Caldwell. Thank you, sir.

Matt Caldwell ([09:20](#)):

Well first want to thank Governor DeSantis, First Lady, and all of the executive branch agencies that have really leaned in to respond to this emergency. They are really doing a fantastic job, as you just heard from DEO secretary Eagle, in particular, we want to thank the governor for embracing the tax reform proposals that he put forward myself. Our tax collector Noel branding and our peers around the state all have very similar thoughts about how to respond to property owners that are now, frankly, out of a home and should not be burdened with paying taxes on a property they no longer are able to use. In particular, I want to make sure to remind the constituents, the folks at home, use our resources on our website, [epa.org](http://epa.org). If your home is damaged, if you have issues with your property, you can go to our website, click that link, tell us what's going on that's going to facilitate getting that process sped up. And to a conclusion of the 550,000 real property parcels in Lee County, we're estimating about a hundred thousand are going to have to be significantly reviewed over the next eight months. And the more that our constituents help participate in that process, the quicker we can make sure that they get the tax

relief that the governor has talked about here this morning. So, again, lee.org, the tax collector myself, we're looking to help those constituents make sure to reach out to us. Thank you guys.

Governor Desantis ([10:45](#)):

And with the taxes, I mean, we basically took the feedback, put in this executive order to delay. We'll work with the legislature to effectively provide the rebate to forgive, but if there's other things that need to be done, you know, these guys know, just let us know. We want to be helpful. Let your representatives know about what the legislature can do when they do meet. And hopefully we'll have those dates nailed down very soon. But it will certainly be before the end of the calendar year. And I think that there may be a whole bunch other stuff that storm related that we may be talking about. We're happy to do that. I mean, my view is we're not just sitting here, you know, expecting everyone else to do our work for us.

Governor Desantis ([11:28](#)):

You know, we obviously, work with whoever will help FEMA or whatnot, but we want to lead, and we want to get things done as rapidly as possible. And I think that that really makes a difference. I mean, to see the folks at Pine Island having, once they got that bridge, they were off to the races and they're getting back and I think it's like 98% are back with on electrical. There was so many poles that got knocked over there. But it was really been a rapid restoration. And so, we love to see that. We love to see Sanibel people being able to go look at their homes and hopefully help salvage as much as you can there. And I know there's a lot of debris, but they've done a great job with that. I mean, it's going to take time, but I think that there's been a sense of urgency. What about the Sanibel Doc Fords? Could you do that?

Governor Desantis ([12:17](#)):

Got you. Okay. Sanibel Doc Fords. We may be able to do Thanksgiving there as well. So, we do have some more, we've got some other announcements to help some folks coming up that we've been working on with some of our agencies. And so we'll be back to be able to make those announcements hopefully as soon as possible. I think they're almost ready to be able to come out so people can start working and getting help. I also just want to say before I leave, that there's been a lot of questions to our office about the CDC protected potentially adding covid vaccine to the childhood immunization schedule. And I know a lot of parents are concerned about that because if that's on the immunization schedule, the fear is that schools could potentially mandate your child to get a covid shot, even if that's not something that you want to do.

Governor Desantis ([13:10](#)):

So I just want to let everyone be clear. You know, as long as I'm around and as long as I'm kicking and screaming, there will be no covid shot mandates for your kids. That is your decision. That is your decision to make as a parent. These are are new shots I get a kick out of when people kind of compare it to MMR and stuff, things that have been around for decades and decades. So parents, by and large, most parents in Florida have opted against doing these booster shots for their, particularly for the young kids. The surgeon General Florida does not recommend this for young kids, for kids under under 18. And basically as reason for that, there's not really been a proven benefit for that. I mean, we can get into some of the potential side effects. You don't even really need to do that.

Governor Desantis ([13:58](#)):

Not been a proven benefit, but it's a free state. Parents can make the other decision if that's what they want. The important thing is that school districts are not mandating this choice. And so we will make sure that your freedom to make those decisions on behalf of your kids remains intact in the state of Florida. Regardless, of what the CDC does, and I understand, you know, there's many people, there's some people you know, that would maybe heed their guidelines, but there are probably many more who've watched how the CDC is performed since covid and of understand there's a lot of political ideology that is seeped into this, and that's not what we want. And those mandates were never scientifically justifiable. That's why we stopped them in Florida, and that's why we'll continue to hold the line on behalf of Florida families. Thanks everybody. Appreciate it.