

Governor DeSantis (00:00):

And a lot of the folks, uh, in the area just wanted to be able to have access. And so we, I tasked the Department of Transportation, uh, to figure out a solution, uh, so that we could restore access so that folks could, uh, you know, live on the island, which is what they wanna do, but also be able to get off to be able to, to go about their lives. And, um, I'm happy to say that, uh, we're able to be here today and, uh, emergency vehicles are gonna start going across, uh, probably in about an hour. They're doing the final, uh, run through and final inspections. And then later today, the public will be able to access this bridge and be able to get back. Woo.

Speaker 2 (00:45):

Thank you, Frank.

Governor DeSantis (00:48):

So just, I just asked everyone, um, be, be, be patient as they work through these last, uh, little kinks. They gotta make sure that, uh, the, some of the emergency can get on. Uh, I know Publix is staged and ready to go, and they're gonna be bringing their trucks across and, and opening, reopening their store. I know they boated a bunch of their employees over today, and so they're ready to receive. And then of course, to have the general public. So, so just listen as to when that exactly will be. Uh, this is, uh, not a state road, I think who runs this, The county runs, runs this, so they'll, they'll obviously, uh, let you know when the all clear, but we wanted it to be done by the end of this week and actually got it done in the middle this week. And if you think about,

Governor DeSantis (01:37):

And if you think about waking up Thursday morning and seeing the images of this, uh, and you said, Well, the state will be able to get that bridge, uh, restored, at least on a temporary basis, uh, in less than one week's time. I think most people would've taken the over on that, just knowing how government is. It takes them a week just to even have a meeting usually about stuff like that. Uh, but our view is, uh, you know, we need to respond very quickly. And so, so we're really fortunate, uh, that the F D O T I want to thank the secretary, uh, Jared Perdue for, uh, really leaning in on this. I want to thank Kevin Guthrie, our DEM, uh, director for,

Governor DeSantis (02:21):

You know, basically it's like when I say, Hey, we gotta get this done. You know, there's some people, Oh, I don't know, maybe we can. And, and he's just like, All right, we gotta do it. I'm gonna figure out a way to do it, and we'll work with the relevant agencies to do it. Uh, so, so we're really excited. I was able to tour Pine Island yesterday on the ground for the first time. And you go over these things in a helicopter, it's just not the same as being on the ground. Uh, what I saw was, uh, I did see, uh, debris, I saw down power lines, damaged infrastructure, but I also saw people that were incredibly resilient. Uh, they're boating in things. They're, they're just, you know, there was no, no way they were gonna be forced to leave this island. This is their home.

Governor DeSantis (03:02):

And so they're, they're really, I think, making use of what they have very effectively. This is gonna open up so much, it's gonna be so much better. Uh, but I have spoken with, uh, some of the, the Kevin Guthrie, also some of the utilities and just said, You know, we've already airdropped some people on here. Now that this bridge is going, they can start getting some of those power trucks because you have

some areas where you have significant down lines. So we gotta work to get that restored. I know they're gonna be able to bring more fuel on the island now that you have this bridge, which is great. I know people are running their generators and doing all that. Uh, but working on the structural fixes for the electric, I think is very, very important. So we're gonna be able to do that. But, uh, I think it's gonna, I think we have a chance to bounce back a lot quicker than people think.

Governor DeSantis (03:47):

I think there, there's a lot of, there's a great spirit, um, on the island and I think folks, you know, they just wanted to be able to stay there and be able to go about their lives like they will. You obviously can't do that effectively without this bridge. So we have it. Um, and we're proud, uh, to be able to, to say I was, they told me, you know, we think we'll do it by Saturday, which would've been great too. Uh, but they were just plowing ahead and they're like, Hey, maybe we'll have it done by Thursday. And now it's like, well, it looks like Wednesday afternoon. So, so hats off really good work. And, um, you know, usually government, uh, will, will promise and underdeliver, Well, here's an overdelivering getting it done ahead of schedule.

Governor DeSantis (04:31):

I was also just on Sanibel on the ground for the first time that I've had an opportunity. Obviously, you know, we've been using search and rescue and I did not wanna detract from that. Uh, so they're now at a point they've been able to go over the island. So I went and again, looking at it from the sky, even at close range, you obviously saw damage, don't get me wrong, but to be on the ground there, uh, there's more debris I think, on sanibel than any place I've seen thus far in terms of what we've been able to do. Of course, there's a lot of vegetation there, generally. So you, you understand why that would be something that would be the case. Some of the structures, some of these nice homes could, could withstand. But some of the older ones, there's really, really significant damage.

Governor DeSantis (05:15):

I saw more damage to the power infrastructure on sanibel than anywhere that I've seen. And, and maybe even more than Fort Myers Beach. I saw concrete utility poles snapped in half. Uh, I saw a lot of places where the lines were totally down. So that's gonna require rebuilding that, uh, power infrastructure and the debris removal effort is going to be really, really massive. So I, the mayor there, you know, I told her, I was like, you know, let us know what you need because we, but I think we need to get a lot of people on that island who can help with power and help with debris removal. And we need to do that before the causeway is fixed. We do now have a con, has the contract done been awarded? It's been executed. Okay. So we done on emergency basis, they did a procurement for a contract to do like we did here at the Santa Be Causeway. Now that's a little bit more difficult fix because the damage was in multiple locations. Nevertheless, they feel confident that this will be done in, in October. They think by the end of the month, by, by the end of o by the end of the month. So we wanna work forward on that. We wanna be able to connect.

Governor DeSantis (06:27):

It's important, but while that is happening, we don't wanna not continue doing stuff. So I told, uh, I've told Kevin Guthrie, I told these guys, you know, we wanna barge people over whatever we need to do to get more workers. Now we got National Guard, first responders, they're doing a really good job. They're basically camped out over there and they'll continue to do it. But to make sure that we have folks working on these power lines, working on, I mean, Sandoval is long. I mean, people don't appreciate

until, until you, until you're actually there. And it's like one down line after another. I mean, it was really incredible to see, uh, up close and the amount of debris, just an incredible amount of debris. This is the first place I was on the ground for that. Reminded me of Hurricane Michael. In terms of the, just the enormous amount of debris.

Governor DeSantis (07:14):

Well, we've gotta, we've gotta get that debris cleaned up. So that's gonna be a major, major effort. Uh, we're obviously, uh, gonna be here to support that 100% cuz we know how important it is. But I'm just happy we're able to get this done. Uh, I definitely understood where people were coming from and we wanted to make sure that they were not isolated or forced to even have to leave the, the island that they love. And so later today will be be great, you know, this is, uh, new, this is temporary, and I know the county's gonna have people out here to kind of make sure, but just go easy on this thing. You know, this is not like 60 miles an hour because they had to do this very quickly. But I think it's an impressive effort. Okay, Kevin Guthrie and then Jared Purdue.

Speaker 2 (07:55):

Thank you.

Kevin Guthrie (08:02):

I want, I wanna thank the governor for his steadfast leadership. You know, he, he's, uh, publicly said that I don't get any sleep until I get the power of fuel, uh, communications restoration bridges, uh, with, in conjunction with Jared Dun. Um, but he's also calling me at 11 o'clock at night, first thing in the morning. This guy is not sleeping either. So, um, he is here for all of the residents of Florida, especially those in this har hardest impacted area. So again, governor, thank you very much for what you're doing. Let me,

Kevin Guthrie (08:34):

I want to, you know, things like, one of the titles that I get inside of this disaster is something called the State Coordinating Officer. So my job is to coordinate amongst state agencies to make sure that we have an a an all of Florida government approach and response. I have, I've been doing this a while now with the state about four, four and a half years. I could tell you in my experience over the last four, four years or so, there has not been a secretary agency head group of individuals that have worked better together than in this disaster. I mean, that is unprecedented in my time in state government. I want to thank Jared. I mean, this guy's a rockstar. He got out here, uh, when the governor, uh, gave him direction to come out here. He came out here, his chief of staff Leda's around here somewhere, directing traffic. I mean, you know, so it's been everybody from the very top all the way to down all the way down, getting stuff done. This guy right here, Dan Eagle, he's working so hard to get your economic development back up and running.

Kevin Guthrie (09:37):

Yep. Jimmy Patronis over there somewhere. I I hear him. I didn't see him. Okay. Jimmy Patronis in his urban search and rescue teams being, uh, they're, they're here. And, uh, I thought I saw Mark Glass, Commissioner of F dle, um, F D'S response here. Hundreds and hundreds of state law enforcement officers have not thousands of state law enforcement officers here and many, many others. So again, thank you secretaries. Thank you. Agency heads again. Thank you, Governor, let's get to the stats.

Kevin Guthrie (10:08):

More than 45 thou, I'm sorry, not 45,000. More than 4,500 mission requests have been put in. Over 3,700 have been processed or completed. More than 34 million bottles of water have been distributed statewide. More than 9 million, uh, meals ready to eat or MREs shelf stable meals have been distributed statewide. More than 500 generators have been deployed more than 500 with a couple of hundred more on the way. We want to take a moment just to say generator safety. Again, we have been very fortunate so far that the messaging has been heard, governor, and we haven't, to my knowledge, Commissioner Glass had a whole lot of, um, carbon monoxide poisoning deaths. So that is good. That is very good. But continue to do that. Don't run generators underneath an open window and do not run generators in a garage. We do not want that. Keep it far away from your house. Keep it elevated outta the water. Working with our contractor on the water for Lee County, I am happy to report that all water treatment plants that actually push water into distribution, all 13, are actually pushing water. All of them,

Kevin Guthrie ([11:23](#)):

Again, ahead of schedule, way ahead of schedule. Now here's what's happening. You may turn on your faucet and may not be the right PSI to come outta there. We've got anywhere from about 30 PSI to about 60 psi in the system. That is by design because we don't wanna blow pipes down, down, what we call down range down to the homeowner, just like electrical systems. You have big transformers and substations that feed into feeder lines that feed into residential lines. Same thing happens here. We don't wanna pressurize the system to the point we cause more damage. So we're gonna be bringing that back online, back online, back online and start fixing distribution. That's where it goes to the home. We're gonna fix that waterline next, our vendor, again, ahead of schedule in that, that area. I talked to several people this morning, Lee County administration, Fort Myers administration, Secretary Hamilton, who is not here, but let me tell you, he is deep in the weeds in the fight on DEP, water quality issues, environmental issues, boats and things of that nature. He and his entire team are over the Lee County EOC right now, getting stuff done there, taught with fema. Talk a little bit more about that in a minute. I have talked to every debris removal company that is involved in this incident. All debris removal companies have people in the field today removing debris that is happening, including the islands. The, we are now on the islands as of yesterday, starting to remove debris in all areas. So I wanna thank those, uh, debris vendors there. Um,

Kevin Guthrie ([12:56](#)):

I talked to FEMA administrator, um, yesterday. I have a standing call with them that happens every day. She encouraged her people to be proactive, get bureaucracy out of the way, get politics outta the way and be proactive. I'm happy to report that because of her proactivity with her team, they approved 60 days, our original request for CAT A and Cat B at a hundred percent we're still probably gonna ask for additional, but proactively they did that on their own without a letter. So we are now covered at 60 days. Category A, category B expenses, which is debris removal, emergency protective measures for 60 days. So that we certainly appreciate FEMA's proactivity on that. I talked to the ag commissioner this morning. AG losses are significant. Um, she's reported that up through her, uh, what we call Emergency Coordinating Officer Colonel Wiggins. We're gonna continue to work with Colonel Wiggins on that, but ag losses are significant.

Kevin Guthrie ([13:50](#)):

We're getting numbers on those. We'll hope to provide you those. In the coming days. More than 200,000 IA individual assistance registrations have been done to date. More tens of millions. Approximately 70 million has been paid out by FEMA already. Again, people are being proactive and we

certainly appreciate that. We'll talk, I'll finish this out with how to apply for individual assistance to include FEMA's Blue Roof System. Homeowners and renters with insurance are still encouraged to apply for individual assistance. They could do one of the following, Go to a disaster recovery center, go to a mobile registration intake center, which would be more like a bus go to disaster assistance.gov. That's disaster assistance.gov. They can download the FEMA app, but if you're in any one of those situations where you just cannot do it, if you can at least get to a phone with coverage, you could call 1 806 2 1 3 3 6 2.

Kevin Guthrie ([14:55](#)):

Again, that's 1 806 2 1 3 3 6 2. FEMA anticipates that they may receive as many as 1 million registrations for this disaster. Please be patient. The lines may be loaded. They may bring busy. Continue to try to get through. Last, I'll end up with a blue roof system , or I'm sorry, the US Army Corps's Blue Roof system has been turned on for multiple counties. You could go to our website. I'll also, at a future press conference, try to have those counties by list, but certainly here in Lee County, Lee County and Charlotte County. I know for a fact the Blue Roof system has been turned on. That phone number is one 800 Blue, I'm sorry, 1 8 8 8 blue. I'm sorry, I'm gonna mess that up again. You would think it'd be Blue Roof, but it's not. 1 8 8 8 roof blue. Again, that's 1 8 8 8 roof blue. So please call that number and you can register over the phone to have somebody come out from a licensed contractor. No money to you. Again as CFO Patronis said yesterday, the US Army Corps will have a contractor put that on your roof for free. Nobody's gonna ask for money. You just call that one eighty eight number and you get that installed on your house. Again, open to all impacted residents inside of Lee and Charlotte County's governor, again, thank you for your leadership. I appreciate you.

Jared Perdue ([16:25](#)):

What an incredible honor to be able to serve this community in their time of need. We were so excited when Governor DeSantis asked us to step in and I, I wanna just mention that the governor has shown unwavering support every step of the way in responding to this storm. He's been there with us making the tough decisions and providing the direction to move forward and do the things that are needed. And this, this is actually a county road. He didn't think twice about stepping in to help Lee County. And we've partnered very closely with Lee County to, to get this roadway to where it's passable again. So we're very excited to be here today. Um, Hurricane Inn obviously, uh, caused havoc on these communities. It affected so many people, requires an urgent call for expertise, supplies, and support. As soon as the governor gave us the direction to work on this facility, we mobilized our contractor, AJ Demo Moya.

Jared Perdue ([17:19](#)):

We mobilized our internal forces across the entire state. We have F D O T leadership here from all over the state working on this project to restore access to this community as public servants. F D O T continues to make Florida families our focus and serve the communities every way we can. Within the first few days following the storm cut and toss crews cleared almost 5,000 miles of state roads and we inspected all accessible state owned bridges throughout the state. On scene here today, you can see the amazing progress that dedicated crew members have done in a little over 50 hours as they were determined to restore access to Pine Island as quickly as they possibly could. I'm honored. I'm honored. F D T has been called to help support Florida's communities in their greatest time of need. Thank you, Governor, for your leadership. There

Reporter ([18:16](#)):

You go. Thank It's like a checklist for you right now. What is the need? What,

Governor DeSantis ([18:28](#)):

Well, you know, that'll probably be determined after Kevin and I talk in the car ride over there. Um, the, the 60 days is important. We, like Kevin said, we may need more and that's something that, uh, the president could obviously approve. Part of it is you have 30 days from the time basically the disaster was declared. And we were fortunate. The White House, uh, declared this very quickly. I don't even think it was a tropical storm yet. We declared the state of emergency on the Friday before the storm. It was a disturbance, but people knew that it could grow. So we appreciated that quick action. And so the question is, is, uh, you have a storm, you have bridges severed, there's a lot of debris out there, but the clock has been ticking. Well, obviously they're not gonna be able to do a lot of debris removal when they don't have consistent access.

Governor DeSantis ([19:09](#)):

Now this will happen better here, Sanibel, We have people over, but we need a lot more people. So I think having that just to be able to let the, the community know categories, A and B, you know, get those reimbursements as they're doing it would be, would be very, very helpful. So hopefully we'll be able to do that. But I also, the way we view it is like as governor, it's like, okay, we prepare for these things. There's all these different levers you pull local government does stuff. We do stuff. We obviously will push buttons for the feds. Uh, but we are willing to act at the state level. Uh, we are not asking that everyone do our work for us. This is a prime example of this. There was a need. So we acted. I've got a disaster fund that we created since I've been governor.

Governor DeSantis ([19:51](#)):

Uh, I have FDOT money, I've got a massive surplus. So we're gonna put that to use, uh, very quickly. And I think that's really what people wanna see. You know, just get this stuff done and move forward. Uh, sometimes the bureaucracy can paralyze this and I will say from local state coordination, fema, uh, there's been less bureaucracy holding us back in this one. Then probably anyone I've seen. One thing I think just generally that we're keeping an eye on, if you look at the power restoration, Lee County with fpl, they've got the vast majority of their customers. Uh, we now have massive numbers of linemen to help, uh, LCEC with, with those restorations. So you're looking at a community like Cape Coral, I saw the mayor here. You know, that's tens of thousands of households that have been without. So we want to put those, put those linemen to use and let's get those folks, uh, back online as quickly as possible. Great news though on the water because there was damage to these water mains. And so the fact that that's flowing, they'll get the pressure where it needs to be. But that is a huge thing. I mean, honestly, if you ask me what to go without, uh, water or, or um, you know, running water or power, I would rather have the running water cuz you can figure out ways to do the power. So you need to get that,

Speaker 5 ([21:10](#)):

The election. What look like,

Governor DeSantis ([21:15](#)):

So the question is, is about the, uh, election obviously we have an election on, uh, November 7th, uh, or eighth. I don't remember the day. I've been too busy doing this. Um, so yeah, obviously people are gonna be able, uh, to vote. I think we still need to, I think the supervisor here is in the process of looking at all the precincts, figuring out, you know, where you may have problems and then they will propose a

solution for, uh, the state of Florida. Uh, you know, I I want to keep it as normal as humanly possible. I think the more you, you depart, you know, just creates problems. But, uh, we do have precedent with Hurricane Michael that hit closer to the election, but it was also a more narrow storm. I mean, you know, you get hit in Panama City, if you were on Panama City Beach, you probably didn't have much damage at all in parts of the beach. This is just, it's a really big storm. So, so just a little bit different. So they'll be working with Cord Bird or Secretary of State, uh, to figure it out. But of course we want to have a as normal election as possible in an area like Lee. There may be needed to be accommodations. Uh, maybe Charlotte. My sense is the other counties are, are probably in good shape. Okay, we're gonna go meet the president here in a minute. We'll see you guys in a little bit.

Speaker 2 ([22:27](#)):

Governor.