

Governor Desantis (00:00):

You've seen, of course a major storm damage, a whole host of things. But you've seen all these people, police officers, sheriffs, deputies, firefighters out there from the moment the storm hit, and they've been instrumental in the search and rescue efforts, which saved a lot of people and made, I think over 2,500 rescues between our USR teams. And I know on the local level, they were doing an awful lot. So, it was really, really important. And then of course, just doing the normal job to help bring stability to the community, restore order, all that stuff has been instrumental, and people do absolutely appreciate that. But I think sometimes people don't necessarily appreciate the fact that yeah, you may have a firefighter out there helping someone get out of their damaged home, that firefighter's home may have been destroyed too. A police officer is out there helping you with something that you have had to deal with.

Governor Desantis (01:00):

They may be suffering the same or more back at their place. And it's tough when you're having to go out there and serve the public knowing that you've got a lot of issues that you have to deal with, but you don't have the luxury to put yourself first. You have to put the people that you're there to serve first, and that's what they've done. So we have, of course, you've done a lot on the response recover. We'll continue to do that. But one of the things that we've been able to do is raise close to 45 million for the Florida Disaster Fund.

Governor Desantis (01:38):

And so that is the first lady has really led the effort there. And I think you're going to see a lot, even a lot more money raised into that over the ensuing weeks. And that just allows you to be able to work with charitable organizations who are on the ground or can help in ways that maybe a federal FEMA program, a state or a local government can't necessarily do. So today we are utilizing some of those resources. And so, we noticed how we talked to the sheriffs. I talked to different people. They had deputies that had homes flooded, damaged, some totally destroyed. And we wanted to be able to be helpful with that. So, I know the Sheriff's Association was working on raising money. And I know these other groups we hear, we have the Florida pba, we have the Florida Fraternal Order of Police, and we have the Florida Professional Firefighters Association.

Governor Desantis (02:32):

All have had members that have been impacted in one way or another. And, all of those definitely have members whose homes were destroyed entirely as a result of this storm. So, we wanted to be helpful with that. We knew they were busy raising money to help. And so, we thought with the First Lady support that we could make a difference. So today, I'm happy to announce 2 million towards those efforts for our first responders to help get them back on their feet from the Florida Disaster Fund. So, you'll have \$500,000 each to the Charitable Arms of the Florida Sheriff's Association, Florida pba, Florida Fraternal Order of Police, and the Florida Professional Firefighters Association. So, that's going to be a big deal.

Governor Desantis (03:23):

That's a big deal. And we want to do more. This is not the end from the Volunteer Florida, Florida Disaster Fund perspective. We want to do more. I know they're going to work to raise more, which is good. But you're talking about hundreds of people across all these different organizations, police, fire and first responders who have been, who have been impacted by this storm in a significant way. So, so

this will help. And I think that this is something that is that is much needed because the work goes on and the people that are wearing the uniform are showing up and they're going to have to continue to show up. And so, to be able to have folks in these organizations, and then of course with Florida Disaster Funds stepping up to augment those efforts, I think a lot of people really appreciate that, just to know that as they're out there fighting for us, but they've got people fighting for them.

Governor Desantis ([04:15](#)):

So, we're proud to have been able to get a lot of support into this. I mean, I think it just shows the generosity of the people, not just in Florida, but throughout the United States of America. And we continue to have more folks that are going to want to step up. So, if you do, or if you're so inclined to want to help the website is Florida disaster fund.org, Florida disaster fund.org. You can also text disaster to 2 2 22. That's 2 2 22. We are thankful for the First Lady for her work on this. And she's working more to talk to other businesses, other individuals who, who may be willing to help and where I think we're going to have some exciting announcements in the ensuing days and weeks with some major charitable organizations that want to partner to be able to meet the needs of the communities throughout Florida, but particularly here in southwest Florida. So, I'm excited to be here. We do have the checks. Where are those? Do we have the checks? Oh, right here. All right. So, I'm going to hand out the checks. So, let's see. Bill, you want to hold the sheriff's? Okay. PBA for fop. All right. And professional firefighters. All right. So why don't you guys. We'll hear from some folks. Of course, the sheriff here, Bill Prime.

Sherriff Prim ([05:53](#)):

Thank you, Governor. Well, normally when the Governor speaks with the sheriff's, great. He's usually here with some visuals. I apologize. I don't have any, but I want to thank the governor time and time again. He has shown us how he's got the back of law enforcement and first responders. And this is just another example of that. I know he goes around the state and speaks, and I know when he speaks, his speaks aren't just words, They're actions. And I really appreciate that because we are one team and we have one mission, and that's to make Florida a great and safe place. And I think we do that together. Now.

Sherriff Prim ([06:30](#)):

We've, we've suffered a great loss here, but I can tell you from experience, I've lived through it before, we will bounce back and we'll be stronger than ever. But that's because we have our community. And that's what we're looking out here for today, is our community. And we're going to bounce back from this. I know things look bleak right now. I can promise you they're going to get better. They will get better, and we'll be stronger for it. And like the governor said, I am so very proud of my men and women of this organization. No matter the position they hold, they were here before, during, and after the storm. They're responding to your needs, lending you a compassionate ear or a helping hand. All while many, actually most of my staff suffered some kind of damage of some sort. And I have many who suffered great loss where they no longer have their houses, but they still came to work.

Sherriff Prim ([07:33](#)):

Even when the Calvary came, my fellow sheriffs, they sent help to help relieve me, help relieve my deputies. I had to force them to go home because they wanted to be out there, and they wanted to help even though they know what they were dealing with at home. And I can tell you, it's hard, it is very hard to focus on these efforts knowing what your family is going through back at home, and you're not there to help them. And I got to say, my wife, she has been a rockstar and I think she has learned so much

about the insurance industry, <laugh> and contractors. I think Donna Barrett may give her a job over there at the C D B I A. So I want to thank all you guys, and especially I wanna thank the governor. Governor, you've been great to us and you're a great partner and I really, really am blessed to have you as our governor. All right, Thank you.

Governor Desantis ([08:35](#)):

Okay. Steadman Stall from the South Florida pba,

Steadman Stahl ([08:40](#)):

Listen, I want to thank Governor DeSantis and your wife for putting this together and stuff like that. For those of you that are suffering right now, I started my career back in 1990 with the city of Homestead. And the city of Homestead was ground zero for Hurricane Andrew. And I can tell you that the officers there, there working when we were, I was one of them, that when you're out there working, trying to do the job, keeping the evil away from, from good, it was, you always had that in back of your mind. What are you going to do about your house and your family, or how are you going to get by? And this token, I can tell you governor is going to relieve a lot of that stress that the officers are going through out there on behalf of all the officers. I want to say thank you. And like the sheriff said, it will get better. I was stunned how quick the recovery that has been done, because when during Hurricane Andrew, it took months. I wish we would've had a Governor Desantis back in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew had <laugh>.

Steadman Stahl ([09:37](#)):

And again, just thank you very much and know that we've got your back and we thank you for having our back and we support you and it will get better, I promise you, for those of you that are dealing with it right now. Thank you. Thanks.

Governor Desantis ([09:51](#)):

All right, Steve Zona, FOP.

Steve Zona ([09:56](#)):

Good morning. Thank you. Does not seem enough governor to you and the first lady for this gesture. I can tell you; I talk to my peers all around the country and they wake up in the morning wondering what their governor elected leader's going to do to them next. We don't have to worry about that in Florida. The governor backs law enforcement every single day, and especially during this storm, when Hurricane Ian was coming, we activated our National Disaster relief team and sent them down here to Florida to help feed the first responders and remediate over a hundred police officers' homes that were damaged, many of them uninhabitable. Then we worried, how do we put those pieces back together for those police officers that continue to work every day? This does that, this, this really does that. So again, thank you Governor, and the first lady, and I'm going to steal a line from one of my close friends that says, no man or woman stands taller, when they've been to me to help somebody else. So, governor here standing you and your wife are standing pretty tall right now. We appreciate you. South Florida appreciates you, and I think all of Florida does. Thank you. Go. All right, Thank

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

Hey, Roco, Salvatory, Florida Professional firefighters.

Rocco Salvatory ([11:16](#)):

Thank you, Governor. You know, when a storm's bearing down on Florida, your firefighters and paramedics earn at home, hunkering down with their families. They're in fire stations and on the rigs working and sometimes, you know, they don't even get home for days to check on their homes. And, our Paran organization, the International Association of Firefighters, the Florida Professional Firefighters really tries to step in and fill that void and help them secure their homes. We had hundreds of firefighters who lost everything. There are firefighters out there riding rigs right now that lost everything. There are firefighters in this room that lost everything. And knowing that the governor, the First Lady, Floridians understand that and have our backs, means more to your firefighters and paramedics than you could possibly imagine. So, thank you. All right.

Governor Desantis ([12:11](#)):

So, we're happy to be helpful on this effort. There'll be many others and there'll be a lot of announcements coming up. We've got a lot of great organizations that are in this fight, and it's some people are just here to some of the groups just come because they want to be helpful. But if there's folks that are really making a difference and we can augment those efforts, that's what this fund is for. And we want to be able to do that. So, stay tuned for more announcements along these lines. And I told these guys, you know, we will do more for them as well as those needs. And I'm sure the needs are going to outstrip whatever week is contributed in whatever they're able to raise in the relatively near term. And that's fine.

Governor Desantis ([12:50](#)):

And we'll be there because we understand how important it is. And we've got a lot of challenges. But I'll tell you, you show me a place where the people have responded with more resiliency than what we've seen here. I think that people have just been working hard. It's not easy, but you know, you can kind of just say, Oh, all hope is lost. Or you can say, you know what? We're going to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and just get back to work. And that's the spirit that I'm seeing all throughout the state of Florida. And that makes a huge difference. And so, yes, we've had a monumental effort in terms of response at all levels of government. And that's important. And of course, the guys here had a lot to do with that.

Governor Desantis ([13:31](#)):

But you also have the communities doing, really going the extra mile. And then these groups from all over the country coming in to help. And they're really, really excited to be here. You know, you don't want to have this happen, but for them to make a difference. I mean, this is what, this is what they live for. And so, they're here helping a lot of folks. So, I just want to say thanks to everybody that's been involved. Okay with that, anything else we can do for, for you guys. Any, any issues, any questions? <laugh>? Yes.

Sherriff Prim ([14:02](#)):

Yeah. I can tell you with the Florida Sheriff's Association, we just had a board meeting earlier this week and we're already set up a foundation for people to donate and they'll be an application process for those Florida deputies who've been impacted by the storm to help get some relief.

Rocco Salvatory ([14:30](#)):

The Florida Professional Firefighters and the International Association of Firefighters already have a program for disaster relief. Both help with buttoning up and tarping homes as well as financial assistance. Yes, <laugh>. Oh, thank you.

Question ([15:22](#)):

We as area recovery to go there and help their houses and this only band.

Governor Desantis ([15:37](#)):

Well, so no, I think it's great. And thanks for helping the people in Pine Island. I think most of you remember that the morning after the storm that that bridge had been severed from the island. And those folks were basically being told by at least some officials, hey, get off the island because, you know, there's not going to be anything being brought there. We don't have the bridge. Well, they reached out to me a couple days after the storm said, is there anything we can do? And I said, Yeah, we, we will do. And so, we were able to get the Florida Department of Transportation on the issue and they were able to do the temporary bid in three days. And so that length, the island to the mainland, that's allowed more supplies to go in. You know, you do have, there's varying degrees of damage.

Governor Desantis ([16:23](#)):

I mean, I'd say obviously very extensive damage. You have mobile homes in some parts, particularly the southern part of the island where there's extensive damage. So, whether it's a tarp, whether it is just internet, so that they can apply for things like FEMA assistance, the Lee County SH County and, and other counties close by are approved for transitional sheltering allowance. And so, if you do have damage and it's not livable, you're going to repair, you can go take that to a rental or a hotel and be able to do that was a little bit difficult right after the storm. So, we had so many people in here for the search the search effort that is decompressing a little bit. We have a lot of people now doing debris removal and all that. But the bottom line is, is now we have access, easy access to the island to be able to deliver relief.

Governor Desantis ([17:14](#)):

Had a massive number of trucks that have gone across for electrical, because if you saw, there'd be just poles snapped in half, maybe not as bad as sandal, which has got hit before, but I mean, it was significant. So, they're having to reconstitute some of the infrastructure for the power and they're getting that done. I think it's going to be the center part, like where all the commerce is. And then they're going to work. And I think the southern part of the island had more damage, but we have trucks, it's run by Ice C but you've got Duke Energy and these people there, massive surge of trucks to be able to get there. So I think getting that reconstituted and now with the right of way being there for a week, it was actually, we opened it last Wednesday, so a week after the storm it was open.

Governor Desantis ([18:03](#)):

You know, that's a huge, huge thing. They are eligible, of course, for tarping, they're eligible for the Army Corps has a program. I'm not sure how that Blue Roof program that they do works on a mobile home or not. It all depends on kind of how you have doing it. But the bottom line is they were having to boat stuff in. Now they're able to convoy things in. And so that's going to make a huge, huge difference. But I am optimistic from the reports I had, you know, that you're going to have really good power there this week sometime between now and the weekend. And that's going to make a huge, huge difference.

They have sent the star link satellite internet for people to be able to get on wifi. So, if you go to like a pod on the island, you can go and log in and do that.

Governor Desantis ([18:47](#)):

And that's just people are applying for FEMA assistance, all these other things, you know, that's just the way to do. But, you know, a lot of the residents came up to me after we did the bridge when we announced that and basically said because of what the state of Florida did, that we've saved the island. Because if we had not done that, the island just would've basically died because they would've been weeks and weeks without enough services to be able to do it. And so, look, that's just, I think at the end of the day when you're doing these things, you know, my view is you got to have a sense of urgency. Of course, the search and rescue were first in, but as that's going on, you got to look to see how you can do other things and parallel to that, you don't wait till that's over and then decide to do other stuff.

Governor Desantis ([19:29](#)):

So that's what we've done in parallel have been working. So, you're building the bridge while they were still doing 72 hours after search and rescue. They're working on plans for the bridge and that I think is allowing us to go quicker than it otherwise would. I've had people tell me that they had bridges in other states that took years to even do a temporary bridge. And so just imagine how devastating that would be for Pine Island. Just imagine how devastating that would be for sandal to not have all those trucks now in sandal that we were able to do with the temporary repairs there. And those repairs are going to be open to the public relatively soon. Probably in another Week or 10 days, I think the 21st of October. And, hopefully I'm, you know, if they can accelerate you, of course we want to do it as soon as possible, but we were helicoptering in people to do electrical and stuff, which is fine, but you don't get enough equipment by helicoptering them in.

Governor Desantis ([20:25](#)):

We were barging people in, which is fine, but you don't get enough there. We actually were working on an amphibious landing craft, like the Marines use to bring tanks to just load up electrical trucks. And so that was in the, that actually probably would've happened today, but we were able to do the causeway two days ago, and that was a beautiful site. You saw massive numbers of trucks pouring into there. So, I think that that kind of key infrastructure, getting those, having such good progress early keeping with that then sets the foundation to be able to do a lot of other stuff. It's a lot easier to fix your own personal property. You know, if you have stores open and internet and all that other stuff, you don't have that, you don't have adequate transportation to get off your own island, then all that stuff becomes much more difficult. All right, we will see you guys soon. God bless everyone. Hang in there. We'll be back.