

Gov. DeSantis (00:00):

Said, Hey, there's gonna be a boat. I was like, Can't we just drive around? Or they're like, "No, you actually need to be on a boat." And it's true, this is by far the most standing water that I've seen anywhere in the state. Uh, we've been all over southwest Florida. We've been in the rural heartland. We've been in central Florida, and I was in northeast Florida. All of them had flood events. Uh, but I've not seen any, uh, anything rivaling this amount of standing water. So I want to thank, uh, the sheriff, uh, his folks. I want to thank FWC for helping effectuate these rescues, Coast Guard, uh, police, fire, everybody that's been involved, uh, really, really significant, makes a big difference. I mean, if some of those houses are like nice houses on big property and they're totally cut off from the world, they can't get out or anything.

Gov. DeSantis (00:44):

And then of course you have other, uh, houses the same way. Uh, so, so really, really significant impacts. And I know on the news, people will show, you know, Fort Myers Beach, really terrible, catastrophic, and that's obviously significant. Uh, but this storm had a really broad impact across the state of Florida. One thing that we're asking the counties to do who have been approved for FEMA, uh, uh, in terms of our FEMA declaration is make sure you're getting people hired to remove your debris. We have 30 days where you will get 100% of the cost of that reimbursed to you. If it goes beyond 30, you may not get, um, nearly as much. And it depends, but you definitely won't get a hundred percent. And so I know there's a lot of stuff going on, and I, and you don't displace life rescue or any of that.

Gov. DeSantis (01:29):

Uh, but on a parallel track, get the people lined up to clear this cuz the debris and I, you know, Sarasota, there's a lot of debris here. I mean, people say it hit and and leave, but I mean, I saw a lot of debris coming in, so please get the debris people lined up. That'll make it much easier, uh, for your reimbursements. And there's gonna be a lot that's gonna need to be done in these communities. And so if you have an opportunity to have that done for you at a hundred percent, take advantage of that. We have deployed 20 of Elon Musks receivers for the starlink internet in Sarasota County now, and we're gonna focus on the first responders, uh, the EOC personnel, but then also at the pods that we have. And so we have huge amount of these pods with food and water set up really quickly because this was all pre-stage.

Gov. DeSantis (02:18):

You know, normally this would not even be set up till 96 hours after the event. Uh, we've got it done, uh, much sooner than that. So people can go, they can get food, they can get water, but then you'll have the star link at the pods. So if you're somebody that needs food and water, you probably don't have internet at your house either. So if you need to go, if you want to contact friends and family, you'll be able to do that. So, so we're thankful for, for Elon for giving that to us. We've already deployed it in southwest Florida. And really, I actually did a press conference yesterday in Hardee County and we did it over wifi using the star link and people said it was crystal clear. So it's a really powerful tool and we're really happy about that. Um, we're working on in terms of the, uh, power, I mean, obviously our role is to make sure those folks were pre-stage, which they were, and then clear pathways to them so that they can get the power back on.

Gov. DeSantis (03:09):

Uh, but we're about 93% of the state with power and we're adding more every day. Sarasota's 36% without, And I think the, the timeline in terms of getting back depends on how much structural repairs they have to do. You know, you're looking at some of these poles in the water that's gonna be a little bit more challenging here than maybe some other parts of the county. Uh, but we really appreciate having folks pre-stage and so we have already, I think by, probably by three o'clock there will be 2 million customers restored for a storm that didn't even leave the state till Thursday evening. So that's, that's definitely more than has ever been done and it's gonna make a difference in getting people back to normal. Uh, Lee County, I was down there, Cape Coral on Friday morning and Publix was open. I mean, it was jam packed, the parking lot at Publix.

Gov. DeSantis ([03:58](#)):

But those are good things, you know, we wanna make sure that, that we're able to do that. So, um, in terms of some of the electrical now here in Sarasota's, basically FPL, Lee County has the electrical co-op that has a lot of the area and they've only done 3% restoration. So what we did yesterday is we called on them to accept mutual aid from other electrical, uh, co-ops, other electrical companies, FPLs, willing to help out and do it because, uh, we want to see those areas and a lot of those areas where the harder, harder hit. Some of them may be more extensive structural repairs and we understand that, but let's get all hands on deck and try to bring that in for the best landing as possible. Um, I'm thankful for the, for the first lady, uh, with her Volunteer Florida and the [Floridadisasterfund.org](#).

Gov. DeSantis ([04:43](#)):

I'll let her say a few words about that. But it's been really impressive to see the outpouring of support, not just people financially, but volunteering and all the people from other jurisdictions that have come down. You have Tampa people here in Sarasota. I was in Hardee County yesterday. We had firefighters from Oregon in Hardee County. I mean, imagine that. Uh, so we've had that. And I think if you look at the Search and rescue mission, we've had more urban search and rescue teams responding to this disaster than any event in American history since 9/11. Uh, and so that's a massive, massive undertaking and that's made a huge, huge difference for so many people. I'm gonna let the first lady talk about her efforts on, uh, on volunteer and, and charity. Yeah,

First Lady CD ([05:31](#)):

I just wanna say a big thank you to everyone across the state of Florida and really across the nation. It's unprecedented what we've been able to do with the disaster response fund. Uh, within 48 hours, we've been able to raise \$20 million At last check we're up to about \$22 million. We issued the first \$1 million out the door to people responding on the ground to micro target those needs. And a lot of the money is gonna be used later on in the recovery fashion because we wanna help people get back on their feet. So if they need funds for that, it's gonna be there and we're gonna continue to fundraise. So anyone who wants to contribute to that fund, we welcome it. And the other thing I would say is people ask, How can I help? How can I help? Go to [volunteerflorida.org](#). There are opportunities for you to be able to deploy here on the ground to help, but there's also things that you can do from afar to contribute to the effort. And so I just wanna say thank you to everyone who's been doing so much to support Floridians. I hear it all the time. People say they are so proud to be a Floridian because of the response and how everybody is coming together from neighbor helping neighbor, from people coming from across the country to help Florida. So God bless you and thank you for the support.

Gov. DeSantis ([06:36](#)):

Yeah, it was that we were down in Naples, uh, helping with some of the meals and you know, I had a bunch of people come up to me saying, you know, I, I'm a new Floridian. And I'm like, Well, you got a baptism by fire. And they're like, Well, you know, I, I don't regret it at all. Like, we're bouncing back and we're happy to be here. So the spirit I think has been really, really good. Okay. Any questions? Yeah,

Reporter ([06:56](#)):

Governor, while we were out there, we saw the family on their canoe. We saw the cars that are stalled out. I heard you talking to the gentleman on the boat who's been here for a while. You said you've never seen flooding like this, but what about the folks who have lived here? What, what are, what kind of feedback are you hearing from them about how they're coping with all this?

Gov. DeSantis ([07:10](#)):

Well, one, I think everyone who's who lives here will say this is the worst they've ever seen here by far, not even close. Um, you know, you think about some of the needs, I, I mean just being able to, to get to kind of safe land. Now some people don't want that. Some people just wanna be in their house and you know, our view on all of this is, you know, we send people to help rescue, but we're you gonna force you to be rescued if you wanna stay, you stay. Um, but you know, I think it's just the water really needs to subside. There's gotta be, need, need to be some support for some of the infrastructure. Um, but it's, you know, the wind is bad, but I mean, the water is just nothing you can do. You can hide from the wind. We build structures now in Florida that will withstand wind.

Gov. DeSantis ([07:51](#)):

Not all of 'em, obviously some of the older stuff in Fort Myers Beach, but a lot of 'em. But when you have this much water, I mean, it's just paralyzing. So I think it's really, really tough. I know we were speaking about the number of people. They've got folks in shelter, uh, that have been displaced. They've got folks with special needs and medical needs, uh, that have been displaced and need access, particularly power dependent folks. So I really think the county here has done a really good job of looking out for those folks. But, you know, they do have some people who just want to hunker down in their home. They understand, you know, there's water out, but that, that's what they want to do. And so they're free to do it, but they do have opportunity to have supplies and all that other stuff. So we're happy to help provide that.

Reporter ([08:29](#)):

You touched on this a bit, but you talked about how you've been in southwest Florida and everybody's seeing all the images of course, of Southwest Florida, but it's so important not to forget this is a disaster too.

Gov. DeSantis ([08:38](#)):

For Sure. And I think that if you compare, uh, like if you go around southwest Florida, obviously Sanibel, um, uh, Fort Myers beach, you just, it's unmistakable when you see that if you go into the more residential neighborhoods a little inland, there's no more standing water. I mean very little. Even the day after when I went, you would go, so if you're just driving a car and you're looking at a neighborhood you wouldn't even know the houses were damaged. Now, I think 12 hours earlier they probably had a couple feet of water. So there is extensive damage, but just in terms of seeing the water there, I saw very little in southwest Florida compared to what I've seen here. So this is a major, major event, uh, that folks, uh, particularly in the southern part of Sarasota County, uh, are gonna have to deal with. And I would say

probably got more water here than anywhere in the state. And, uh, and certainly, uh, the standing, it's persisted longer than anywhere else in the state.

Reporter ([09:32](#)):

We saw our Tampa crew here. I know you mentioned there's everybody from everywhere and that is so appreciated. But how's everybody holding up? I mean, you got long term work to do here. Are you getting what you need on the federal level? You know, how are the reinforcement?

Gov. DeSantis ([09:43](#)):

It's, it's been good. I think that we have so much food and water at these pods that, um, we're probably gonna end up having a surplus. Cuz I think what's happened is the stores have opened so much quicker than people thought. So Publix is packed. I was in Fort Myers yesterday. Walmart is packed. And so I think people are trying to get in their normal routine. So those are there people need it. But my sense is, is we're totally good with that. You know, the fuel supply is very good. I think the issue with the gas is if the station can't run electricity, then the pumps don't work. So unless you're doing generator, uh, if you don't have power restored, then those gas station, those gas pumps are down. But it's less a supply of fuel than it just getting every back online. You know, in Florida, if you have a certain number of pumps, you reach a threshold, you have to have a generator.

Gov. DeSantis ([10:29](#)):

But a lot of the gas stations are underneath that threshold. So it's just interesting how that's kicked in. But you know, I was in Fort Myers Friday morning and they had Wawa open and some of these other ones were open pumping gas. So, so that's a good thing. But I think the, the continued progress on the electrical continued pro, the gas stations coming online will flow from that. Plenty, plenty food and, and and water. And then I think it's just, um, there's a couple parts of the state, parts of Lee County have had issues with their, with their water system, major water breaks. We have the, had the Army Corps of Engineers in there and we're sending additional people from the state to help because I think it needs to get done as soon as possible. I mean, you need to have the running water and basic sanitation that will solve a lot of those problems too. Thank

Reporter ([11:16](#)):

You. What does a, um, insurance village

Gov. DeSantis ([11:19](#)):

So what the intent of it is, and Jimmy Patronis is heading this up is to get every carrier that would have policies in that part of Florida there to be able to answer questions for people, homeowners, um, about their damage, their policies, and to help them filing the claims. And that's not just for, uh, typical homeowners policy, it's also for flood policy. And if you look here, I would imagine the vast, vast majority of the claims are gonna be flood claims. There is going to be representatives from the National Flood Insurance Program, you know, at these insurance villages. And so I think, uh, if you go once you get off the coast in, in Lee County, yeah, I would say the vast, vast majority of insurance claims are gonna be flood claims. Uh, but certainly here is gonna be flood claims. You know, there's a dispute about, oh, does it caused by wind or is it caused by water?

Gov. DeSantis ([12:11](#)):

If the wind pushes the water? And for storm surge, you know, maybe that debate, I personally would say that, you know, if you have four feet of water in your house, that's a flood. And I think that you should have access to the flood policy. So we're obviously gonna be pushing that. Um, some counties had a little bit more wind damage, but I would say most of what I've seen so far in the state, apart from the initial fury on the coast in southwest Florida, uh, has been flood policies. And in our, in our message to kind of the insurance carriers are like, you know, we need to get these claims processed and people need to get, get made holes quickly as possible. And so we're gonna be pushing for that. Uh, especially if you have a total loss of your house. I mean, you know, you need to be able to, to get that money and you need to be able to move forward.

Reporter ([12:54](#)):

Governor, some people who we've talked to in North Port said they feel a little bit like forgotten compared to other parts of the state, perhaps. Like they just feel like maybe people aren't paying as much attention to them as they are

Gov. DeSantis ([13:05](#)):

Well, they're paying more attention now that I'm here. No, exactly. That's why I came. I mean, my view is that, you know, the cameras are gonna go where kind of the most dramatic images are and that's understandable. Uh, but I was in Hardee County yesterday at, we're gonna go to DeSoto and obviously we're here in Northport stressing to people that this had broad impacts. And it's not just where the almost cat five winds hit. Uh, this is a, this was a massive slow moving storm that dumped a historic amount of water on our communities and place like Northport has produced historic flooding. And, and that's in some ways a more difficult problem either even than the wind damage. And so we're here highlighting this. I obviously wanted to get a, get a good look myself, uh, but we understand the significance of what's happened in communities outside just kind of what we would consider ground zero.

Reporter ([14:00](#)):

But in a situation like this where there's so many communities that have been impacted like on a huge scale, how do you decide how to like, divide up the resources

Gov. DeSantis ([14:09](#)):

Well, we're just giving everybody resources. I mean, you know, you have, you have how many pods are now in Sarasota? Uh, uh, so we have four pods for food and water just in Sarasota, um, alone, you know, we've got pods in Charlotte, in Lee, we're gonna, we have a more in, in in some of the rural, so we're gonna just continue to bring resources to bear. I don't think it's an issue of they're not being resources. I think we've got resources. I think we've got a lot of people that want to be involved in this. Uh, and then we're gonna continue to do it. So, um, and you know, we're bringing the, bringing the Elon Musk devices here so that you have that in the southern part of the county, particularly so that the, the first responders and law enforcement can communicate freely and respond, uh, as things need or are needed.

Reporter ([14:52](#)):

Governor, do you have any thoughts on what you would say to seasonal residents? A lot of people who come here come here six months, a year. What would you say to them about if they're gonna show up in October? Should they, should they not? You know,

Gov. DeSantis ([15:02](#)):

No, look, I, I think, no, I think that they, they they should come. I mean, I think that, um, you know, you're gonna see, you know, this situation has been stabilized through most parts of the state very quickly. Obviously there's some areas including here, you know, that are gonna, that are gonna need some more care. Uh, but I would imagine most of the seasonal residents are gonna be, are gonna be just fine. Uh, you don't need to rush back now to inspect your property. I mean, they're still first responders, everybody else still doing their job. But certainly when, when it comes time, uh, look, I'm optimistic that things are gonna bounce back quicker than people would normally think from, from, from a storm like this. It doesn't mean there aren't challenges. Of course there's challenges. It doesn't mean people, uh, aren't gonna need help.

Gov. DeSantis ([15:43](#)):

We're gonna need a lot of help. We're gonna continue to provide that. Uh, but if you look, I think the, the, the kind of the spirit that I'm seeing, uh, is people, you know, wanting to move forward. I mean, when I have new Floridians not deterred by having to go through this, you know, you know that, that there's a good spirit. So, so I think it's gonna be good. Now, in some areas where we have seasonal residents like Sanibel, you know, that island, you know, the causeway was severed, so you have multiple breaks in the causeway, that's gonna be a little bit more difficult. We are patching Pine Islands Bridge and we're gonna do that relatively shortly to give them a inability to get on and off the island. Sanibel a little more difficult because that would require multiple patches on a short term basis.

Gov. DeSantis ([16:22](#)):

Maybe we can do it, but we're looking at that to see if, if the, the other option would be, uh, ferrying people or boating people, you know, used to be in island that didn't have a, a causeway, they used to ferry back and forth, but that's not what they do now. So in that one would be, you know, they may wanna look to see kind of how things are going. Uh, Jim Eifert from the National Guard, his people, you know, they're really on the ground there trying to clear the roads, make sure everything is kind of in normal order from some of the damage. Now of course you have electrical water, you have all those things that need to do, and then there's structural damage that took place. But, but I think it's a great place and, um, you know, a lot of these, these communities did well. And of course if you look at the, where the track of the storm was even 24 hours before landfall, uh, a lot of people thought that it would be way more impacts in the Tampa Bay area and quite frankly, even more impacts than what we got in Sarasota. I mean, people were looking at potentially a direct strike in between Venice and Sarasota that obviously would've caused this damage, but it probably would've caused even more extensive damage. Okay, thanks everybody.