

Governor DeSantis (00:00):

I saw was on, uh, some of the homes were wiped out, and some of it was just concrete slabs. Of course, there were damage to, to some of our infrastructure, particularly the sanibel causeway. There were, uh, breaks in that in multiple different areas. It was interesting, the pylons on the water where you had that part of the bridge that actually was, was good. It was the point where it was on a sandbar that just got totally wiped away, or from the mainland, you know, there was breaks there. So that's gonna require major, major, uh, uh, overhaul and potentially a complete rebuild. They're gonna look at it and see, um, that's the only way on Sanibel and Captiva Island. So the operations to help people, there have been, uh, mostly by air, Uh, and all told search and rescue operations. It started in the wee hours of the morning.

Governor DeSantis (00:52):

As soon as the winds died down enough to where it was safe, Uh, you had Coast Guard assets. You had urban search and rescue teams. We've had the national guard out assisting people. Uh, there have been more than 700 confirmed rescues, and there's likely, uh, many more than that. Uh, that will be confirmed as more data comes in. Uh, people have been rescued from places like Fort Myers, Fort Myers Beach, Sandal, uh, Marco Island, as well as the barrier islands in Charlotte County. Uh, obviously there was a lot of, um, calls coming in as the storm was really raging yesterday. Uh, people, uh, who did not evacuate were hunkered down. There was storm surge. There was a lot of, of, um, uh, of apprehension. Understandably, when initially the first responders came this morning, people would wave them down, uh, whether they were by helicopter, boat, or high water vehicle.

Governor DeSantis (01:44):

Now, what they're finding is on places like sanibel, most of the residents are just waving, Thank you for coming. But they say that they're fine and that they're staying put. Now, I think that there's gonna be issues with being on some of those islands, uh, because they're not gonna have services like we expect, uh, for quite some time, given the limitations of transportation. Uh, but nevertheless, that, that's a sign that, that some of the folks who did write it out, uh, are stabilized, uh, in their home. Uh, they are first responders are doing, uh, targeted searches, just going home by home, checking to see, um, if people are okay, and then responding to specific reports. Uh, if they're missing loved ones, Uh, they're woken, of course, be, uh, many more rescues that are added, uh, to the tiller. Uh, now we, we absolutely expect to have mortality from this hurricane, but I'll just caution people, You know, there's a process by where that is confirmed.

Governor DeSantis (02:37):

Um, and there's people, I know the people have said certain things, um, you in terms of confirmed, uh, that will be made apparent over the coming days. Um, but, but I think the things that have been said out there, that is not something that has been confirmed at this, at this juncture. Uh, of course, we have, uh, thousands and thousands of people on the ground, uh, working to restore power, uh, opening the roads, bringing in food and water, and restoring communications. Talking with, uh, local folks in Lee County. Uh, probably the biggest immediate hurdle that they're facing is their county water utility had a big water main break, uh, that is necessary to be fixed in order to provide basic water services, uh, for the residents of the county. So they have been working to troubleshoot it. They requested, uh, the state to enlist federal support to help diagnose and potentially fix the problem.

Governor DeSantis (03:28):

Uh, so we worked with FEMA and, and Gracia and the Army Corps of Engineers, uh, came in. I mean, they came in pretty early. Um, I think, I think, I think Kevin called them maybe like three in the morning. They were in southwest Florida from Jacksonville by early this afternoon. And so they're helping to diagnose and hopefully be able to remedy that. But that's gonna be something that's very, very important for the county, uh, to get fixed. In the meantime, uh, we are assisting healthcare facilities, uh, to provide, uh, working water because they need that to be able to take care of their patients. So we're shuttling water from Lakeland into healthcare facilities. Uh, right now they're about 20 trucks in route with 60,000 gallons of water for a total of 1.2 million gallons of water. And I think they have been able to fix some of the water ish.

Governor DeSantis (04:12):

One of, one of the three hospitals has actually been able to fix the water problem there. So that's good news. Uh, Port Tampa, Port Everglades. Um, their fuel is flowing in to some of our major ports, and so you're seeing a lot of fuel now flowing throughout the state. More than 330 gallon, 30,000 gallons of fuel have already been moved in to southwest Florida. I actually saw a couple of the gas stations open in, in the Fort Myers area when we were there today, uh, with this fuel, the state of Florida set up six fuel depots to fully support all first response efforts. And we think the remaining ports in the state of Florida, uh, will open between sometime tomorrow and sometime on Saturday. Uh, there's been a massive amount of, of, uh, supplies staged. We're also bringing more into the region, more ambulances, more food, water and ice, more generators, more, Uh, actually, we're bringing in two full service mechanical shops, uh, to help to repair and maintain emergency vehicles, which, you know, they're in rugged conditions when you're going through, uh, water and others bringing in more tarps, bringing in kits for parents of infants and toddlers, uh, to give them 10 days, uh, uh, worth of support, uh, and bring in more high water ladders.

Governor DeSantis (05:27):

Now, as of 6:00 PM there are 2.6 million approximately reported power outages through throughout the state of Florida. And that was anticipated. Uh, so far compared to this morning, uh, 200,000 accounts have been restored in southwest Florida. Uh, 28,000 in Lee, 62,000 in Sarasota, 14,000 in Collier, 33,000 in Manatee, 12,000 in Charlotte, and 44,000 in Hillsborough have been restored. Of course, the pre staging for this was over 42,000 linemen. So they're there on the ground really in different parts of the state, but particularly in southwest Florida. Uh, when they first got in there, of course, they're looking to see what is the damage, uh, how much of our infrastructure has been, has been destroyed, how much of it has, has, has, has held up. And I can tell you, when we were in Charlotte, uh, the reports were generally positive that a lot of that infrastructure had been able to weather the storm.

Governor DeSantis (06:22):

You still have to work obviously, to reconnect the power, uh, but in some areas you may need to rebuild from the ground up. In other areas where the infrastructure maintained integrity, uh, you would be more just trying to, to, to rehook everything. So that's kind of that's a 24 7 process. So if anybody sees, uh, some of the utility trucks pulled over somewhere and, and maybe someone getting rest, understand they're working constant shifts, uh, and everyone's on the clock the whole time, and they don't actually ever have a time where people are not working. So we really appreciate that because we understand how important it is, uh, for folks to have those basic services. Uh, resume. Uh, there have of course been damages to cell phone towers, particularly in places like Lee, uh, county, uh, the, the, uh, telecom companies have brought in. They, they earmarked a hundred cell phone towers, uh, being set up.

Governor DeSantis (07:15):

Uh, and, and many of those are being set up in southwest Florida. I've been able to speak with the CEOs of both AT&T and T-Mobile. While there have been damages, a lot of their infrastructure, uh, has, uh, has weathered the storm, uh, fairly well. So while there may need to be repairs, uh, you know, they feel good about getting up service. Um, and I know some people do have service in those areas, and, and we were able to see that FDOT had more than 1200 personnel on the ground. And, and I'm happy to report the road situation is, is by and large, really good. I think if I was just talking with Kevin before we came out here, if we were here yesterday at like noon, uh, thinking about what the road situation would look like, uh, I think we thought that there would've been way, way more roads that were blocked by debris.

Governor DeSantis (07:59):

Uh, of course we did have the Sanibel. I mean, there are, there are issues, but there was also a lot of roads where the traffic is flowing on I 75 without a problem. And most of the other roads, um, are doing really well. Sunshine Skyway Bridge has reopened, and so we were happy to see that. Uh, most school districts throughout the state will be reopening either Friday or Monday, Obviously, Lee. And, and some of those areas, uh, may be a little bit different calculation for them. Uh, we're thankful that FEMA has activated individual assistance for Floridians who've been affected by this storm. If you are in need of help recovering, visit disasterassistance.gov or call 1 806 2 1 3 3 6 2. Uh, FEMA has approved our request to add some of the central Florida counties into the individual assistance. Uh, Kevin will have more details on that, but we appreciate that because you look at the images, like you can see a house that's been totaled on Fort Myers Beach, and obviously it's a very sad thing to see.

Governor DeSantis (08:59):

You can see boats that have been flipped over, or cars that have been flipped over, and, and those are very striking images. Uh, but as the storm has moved through the state, it has caused a, a lot of problems with really historic flooding in, in parts of Central Florida and into Northeast Florida. And so it's important that those folks, uh, also have the ability to get assistance if they need it. Uh, over 8,700 people have already registered with FEMA. Um, if you're, uh, gonna, gonna make a claim, take a picture. If you've had flooding, take a picture of the waterline on your house, Make sure you're documenting the damage. Jimmy Pat patrons, our Chief financial officer, is gonna be doing Insurance Villages, uh, at these disaster recovery sites. So if you go in now, you don't need to go in to get FEMA assistance. You can do it online, but if you have questions, you go in, uh, you can have people from the different insurance carriers.

Governor DeSantis (09:48):

Uh, Jimmy's also gonna help people who have, uh, and NFIP flood policies, uh, to be able to file those claims and get those claims paid, uh, as soon as possible. And, and we, uh, expect that, that that will be done without, without much delay from, from the insurance carriers. We're happy that a lot of businesses have committed to provide our first responders and volunteers, uh, with Sustenance, Culvers, Firehouse Subs, Burger King, four River Smokehouse, and Maria Oyster Bar in Texas Roadhouse. And we think many, many more will want to come and also offer assistance, uh, for those who are coming in as either first responders or linemen. Uh, Bucces is giving away meals and soft drinks. If you stop in their Daytona location, uh, you'll be able to avail yourself with some really good stuff there. Uh, we're continuing. As, as, uh, Kevin has said, you know, these first 72 hours are really life safety and then, uh, working to restore the, the main, uh, services, power, fuel and communications.

Governor DeSantis ([10:46](#)):

And there's massive numbers of people on the ground working 24 7 to do that. Uh, of course, it's too early to know exactly what the needs of, of everybody, uh, is gonna be, but we obviously anticipate some Floridians, uh, may end up being displaced from their homes. And the First lady is spearheading efforts with Volunteer Florida to activate the Florida Disaster Fund, where people can donate. Uh, and it's much better to donate financially than to send items. And we really appreciate the thought. When people wanna send water, they wanna send these things. Uh, but, you know, Florida DEM and others have been contracted for this. So this stuff is there. Uh, the best thing you can do if you're gonna give a, a financial contribution that can go to some of these organizations, uh, that are a little bit more nimble with how they help people.

Governor DeSantis ([11:30](#)):

You know, FEMA you, you know, will say you have statutes and you have regulations, and you have things, You either qualify for certain types of individual assistance or you don't, They're not able to go outside of what Congress has, has decreed on that. A private organization, if you have more unique needs that maybe aren't covered by that program, they can meet those needs. And so providing the, the cash assistance is the best way to do that. That if you want to contribute, go to www.floridadisasterfund.org or text disaster to two, uh, 0 2 2 actually. What is it? It's, it's more than 2 2 2 2 2 2 0 2 2 2.

Governor DeSantis ([12:08](#)):

Okay, Well, I'll let the first lady do that cuz she does it better than me. They, they put texted 2022 on this and that. I know it's more than that. I'm not a text guy, but I do know you need more numbers than that. All right. For those who want to come volunteer in person, that's another way where you can really be, be helpful. And Volunteer Florida has a website for that www.volunteerflorida.org if you wanna see volunteer opportunities. And we would certainly welcome individuals that want to give, uh, obviously their money, but also their personal, uh, time and effort. Okay. Kevin Guthrie's here with some additional updates.

Kevin Guthrie ([12:44](#)):

Thank you, Governor. Thank you, uh, first Lady for, uh, your going out to the area today and doing some onsite assessments. Um, we're entering that phase of the response where we start to, uh, really get into what's referred to as indirect deaths. We've been, myself and the governor have been mentioning this now for quite some time. Generator safety, generator safety, generator safety. Now we're gonna start adding chainsaw safety, getting on ladders, getting on roofs, watching out for power lines that are mixed inside of trees. People need to be extremely careful if you do not know how to use a chainsaw, if you do not know how to climb a ladder, if you do not know what the difference is between a cable line and a power line, you should not be doing that. Leave that to the professionals. Again, as the governor indicated two days ago, we have significantly more indirect deaths from disasters that are 100% avoidable than we do the disaster itself.

Kevin Guthrie ([13:49](#)):

So please be safe. Drone pilots, we're starting to have some issues with drone pilots in areas. Please do not operate your drones in the areas where we have military aircraft, search and rescue aircraft working. When you go in there with their drone or your drone, they have to stop working. Please stay out of the area and let us, let us do our job. Similarly, we saw it down in, uh, Fort Myers today. People

are wanting to go out and look at the damage for every car that's going down. A, a street that's preventing a power line crew from getting in there and working is preventing a search and rescue crew from getting in there and working. Please stay outside these areas so that we can get in there. Power outages are being restored. The governor read through a laundry list of individuals that are having power restored.

Kevin Guthrie ([14:50](#)):

We did hear a question earlier, uh, today about, well, it's still 2.6 million. It was 2.6 million this morning. Jacksonville has been hit. We have power outages in, uh, Duval County, St. Johns County, Nassau County, Baker County. So those are gonna offset here for a little bit. While, for a little while, FPL, the Municipal Electric Association and its Municipal Electric Partners, the Cooperative Electric Programs are getting their stuff turned back on. Please be patient. I we have every faith and trust in them to restore the power. However, in places where we're gonna have to rebuild infrastructure, that's going to take longer. As a governor mentioned, Fort Myers Beach Sanibel Pine Island. That's gonna take some time in those areas. We do have some other challenges. There is potentially vehicles in the water. There are potentially boats in the water. There is potentially debris in the water.

Kevin Guthrie ([15:46](#)):

We will be working with our federal partners to mission assign or asset admission, assign special resources to go in there and start looking under the water to do an underwater survey to ensure that we could actually get the necessary barges and heavy equipment into those areas to respond effectively. I think this is an appropriate time to say gracious. Thank you very much for all your assistance. Admiral McPherson as well, as well as, uh, the tag. Uh, General Eifert has been with me since day one. Sitting here. He was there at zero 700, which means he had to leave St. Augustine at zero four something. Thank you very much. Um, we have, we continue to mobilize, uh, additional resources to impacted areas. Specifically today, we did more than 400 bottles of oxygen, 100 ambulances, an additional 120 utility trucks, four mobile triage units. These are specific units to help triage patients if somebody becomes injured.

Kevin Guthrie ([16:47](#)):

We do have hospitals that have some issues and cannot intake patients. So this is the ability to triage individuals for that 60 truckloads of water, 40 truckloads of meals, 40 truckloads of ice. That was a question earlier a couple of days ago. We have brought in additional pet foods supplies for displaced pets. Five truckloads of blankets. Five truckloads of cots. And I believe this, uh, was requested earlier by someone. Nearly 100,000 tarps. FDEM recovery staff are now beginning the, uh, process of rapid damage assessments and the impacted counties to expedite all available federal assistance for the disaster recovery. The governor mentioned earlier that additional counties have been added to the category, a debris removal expedited project, or expedited, uh, uh, declaration and IA or individual assistance. Those counties are Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Polk. Again, these counties are available for 30 days at 100% in federal assistance. I am gonna turn integration and ask, what is that website that we need to direct everyone to for mobile intake,

Gracia FEMA ([18:03](#)):

For registration,

Kevin Guthrie ([18:04](#)):

For registration for

Gracia FEMA ([18:05](#)):

Survivors? It is, uh, [disaster assistance.org](https://www.disasterassistance.org).

Kevin Guthrie ([18:09](#)):

[Disaster assistance.org](https://www.disasterassistance.org). So again, we are proud that 8,700 people have already done that, and we want to continue to do as much as we can via web registration. Again, Governor, First Lady, thank you so much for your leadership today. Okay,

Speaker 4 ([18:22](#)):

First lady.

FLCD ([18:24](#)):

All right, well, flying over the devastation and destruction firsthand, all I can say is, you know, our hearts and our prayers are with so many people who are suffering. Uh, which is why about 24 hours ago, uh, we launched the Disaster Relief Fund. And I'm happy to say that after 24 hours, we have raised more than \$10 million into that fund. And if you remember this morning, just at eight o'clock, 8:00 AM we came out here and we talked with you, I think it was at 1.6 million. So now we're over 10 million. So I just wanna say thank you to all of the great Floridians who stepped up to support our efforts and all of the people across the country who are helping Floridians. Thank you. We are going to make a big difference to help get resources immediately to those people who need them most. Uh, Amazon, we wanna thank them.

FLCD ([19:12](#)):

Centene Ian McKenney, Florida Blue Lanier, Walmart. We'll be hearing from them in just a second. Donated a million dollars. Boeing, Publix, Simply Healthcare, Airbnb, Teco Energy, Wells Fargo, Verizon, cvs, Duke Energy, Goldman Sachs Rumble, Florida Power and Light, National Christian Foundation, the PGA Tour and Horne, just to name a few. And that doesn't even go into all of the donations that came in from people who are giving five and \$10. And thank you. Thank you so much for what you're doing. Also wanna say thank you to Tom Brady, who put on his website a special shout out to the defense, uh, or to our, uh, fund, uh, the, uh, Florida Disaster Fund that got a lot of attention and raised a lot of money. So thank you for your support of your community. Also, uh, thank you to Visa, amex, PayPal, and Braintree. They are waving their fees, so all of this money will go directly to servicing the people in need.

FLCD ([20:10](#)):

Uh, and again, as the governor mentioned, one of the important things to understand about this fund and why it's so important is because we are getting needs, needs instantaneously into the EOC, into the Emergency Operations Center. And so we're able then to communicate those needs to those nonprofits on the ground so we can meet them quickly. And so these funds make a big difference to help micro target what we're seeing. And again, when we are flying over Lee County and some of these areas that were just devastated, they are going to need things like foods and tarps and what have you. And so what is not being supplemented by the state, which is a lot we will be able to do in the private sector. Uh, so again, to give the, the website, [Florida Disaster fund.org](https://www.floridadisasterfund.org), and you can also text Disaster to 2 0 2 2. And God bless you and thank you for your support.

Governor DeSantis (20:56):

Okay. All right. Volunteer Florida, Josie Ta Mayo. Thank you.

CEO Tamayo (21:04):

Good evening everyone. And I wanna thank you on behalf, uh, for being here. And first of all, I wanna thank, first of all the first Lady and the governor for their leadership in this. And I must say it is a record amount of money that we have now, um, received for the voluntary for the Disaster Fund. And I want to thank obviously our partners, our corporate partners. I will say to you, we have been on the phone calling people and they have been giving to people in Florida specifically, uh, with needs. And we plan to make very good use of that money. And I wanna thank each and every person that has reached out called, and specifically for those in the storms path, uh, that are now recovering. And so these funds will go for response and recovery. Uh, we will be, um, doing that, looking at all of that very carefully.

CEO Tamayo (21:46):

And I wanna thank our corporate partners specifically, uh, Walmart, who has, uh, in fact, Miss Molly Brown is on our foundation, and this fund is, uh, administered through our , Volunteer Florida Foundation. So on behalf of everyone, I wanna thank you all for being specifically wanna thank the First Lady for her leadership on this and the governor and everyone who has called in need. And, uh, please, I'm gonna tell you, if you wanna volunteer, please go to our website@volunteerflorida.org. Uh, we have someone standing by that can connect you with nonprofits that are in need of volunteers and also, uh, www Florida disaster fund.org and or text, uh, disaster, uh, to 20, uh 2 2 22. And I will say there will be a banner at the FSU football game this weekend with our Florida Disaster Fund. And also USF has agreed to do that. And in my mind, I'm gonna get every college, um, team to do that in Florida as long as we need them. Thank you so much, and thank you First Lady and Governor.

Governor DeSantis (22:46):

Okay. Okay. We're happy to have John Furner, President, Chief Executive Officer of Walmart.

John Furner (22:55):

Good evening and thank you governor and First Lady for, uh, for coming together today and also for you, your team's quick response following just the devastation that we're seeing from, from the hurricane. So I'm proud to be with you here in Florida tonight representing Walmart to further discuss how Walmart will continue partnering, uh, with all of you and your team. While we continue to respond to the devastation of the storm, Supporting communities is core to Walmart and Florida is our community. Many of our associates, customers and members all across Florida are feeling the effects and the of the extensive damage caused by the storm. And like all of you, we've been closely monitoring it's tracked to ensure that we stay in tune with what our stores, our clubs, our supply chain teams need to be doing to serve before, during, and after the storm. So in preparation for the the response and recovery, we've strategically placed things like generators, refrigerated trailers, merchandise, and additional personnel in the right locations to give us the best opportunity to resume operations as soon as it's safe to do so.

John Furner (23:58):

We have 385 stores and clubs here in Florida, nine distribution centers. And at one point today, 244 of those were closed. And we think over the next day or so we'll have the majority of those back open and operating. So we've helped relocate associates living in mandatory evacuation zones, and we're carrying

out wellness checks for those living in the other impacted areas. Now, throughout all of this, our thoughts and our prayers remain with those who are impacted, and we are moving quickly to help. To that end, on behalf of Walmart, Sam's Club and the Walmart Foundation, I'm announcing our commitment of up to \$6 million for recovery and relief efforts. And this level of support does include, uh, first leading out at \$1.5 million investment to support the Florida Disaster Fund donation donations of essential supplies and grants to local and national organizations who are here on the ground supporting relief efforts.

John Furner ([24:53](#)):

Now, what we do know is Walmart customers members and our associates are the most general people that we know. And as part of this investment, we're also launching a national customer and member giving campaign at our stores and clubs and an associate donation campaign through Walmart's associate giving program. And we understand our responsibility to the communities we serve, and we'll proudly work side by side with each and every one of you to ensure we're doing everything we can along with our first responders to restore our communities as quickly as possible. And this includes mobilizing resources and services to those people who need them. So as a company and as fellow Floridians, when our friends, our neighbors, and our loved ones need help, we're, we will gladly step forward to support them. Thank you.

Governor DeSantis ([25:42](#)):

Okay, so we're, um, uh, very, very much monitoring the, the impacts that we're, that we're seeing in, in other parts of the state other than Southwest Florida. Um, and I know, uh, Kevin is, uh, uh, working on, you know, we're gonna obviously have a big response in southwest Florida, but when you talk about FEMA, some of these other things, uh, that there's gonna be a need to be response in some of these other parts of the state, uh, on an individual basis. And so I know he's working, uh, on that. And, um, you know, we're gonna be back down in all these areas and, and working hard to make sure, uh, that we can get people back on their feet. And that'll take some question, Your

Reporter ([26:15](#)):

Honor, I know that a lot of people are questioning what the casualty count is, and I know you addressed it, but, um, is the state at least preparing for a large casualty situation given what we heard from, uh, the Lee County Sheriff as well as the president earlier today?

Governor DeSantis ([26:29](#)):

Well, I mean, I think it's a massive storm. I mean, I think we anticipate casualties. I think Kevin made a good point about how many are gonna happen from the time it hits on. We've stressed to try to minimize both, obviously, but we're now in, in this situation where, uh, there's gonna be hazards out where people can, uh, be in harm's way still. Just because the storm is passed does not mean that, that there's not additional hazards. Um, operating things like generators standing. Now, fortunately I was looking, you know, there wasn't as much standing water as I was anticipating. I think that the surge, storm surge that they had feared in Charlotte, while they did get water, there was flooding. I don't think it was at quite the level that was initially feared. Obviously in Lee, you know, you had a massive storm surge at the barrier islands. You did have some on the mainland, but I saw the roads by and large, clear, there were a couple ice roadways where I saw, uh, where there was water. So hopefully, uh, some of those hazards, um, are minimized. Um, you know, I think if you look at the, the most significant storm in

the history of Florida, uh, was okochobee in the twenties. And uh, you guys can look it up, but I mean, I don't, I don't think we would be anywhere approaching that we've

Reporter ([27:38](#)):

Heard, you know, just anecdotally from various local officials, the total would be above 16 people right now dead. Uh, you're not confirming that, but I'm wondering as, as you're getting out to these barrier islands now, are you, are you getting people off these islands? Are you, you are not finding massive numbers of dead people on these

Governor DeSantis ([27:58](#)):

That is correct. I think the this are, but at the same time, you know, they're going to see people that may be visibly in need or knocking on doors and most of them are saying, I'm fine. If there's no answer. I don't know that they're going into those homes. Now, mainly those homes are vacation homes and seasonal residents. So we'll see now there are, uh, so what will be confirmed as storm related, you know, that that will happen, you know, relatively soon. I can tell you that there have been some non storm related, uh, fatalities as well. I mean, for example, in Charlotte County, they reported a suicide during the storm. They also had somebody pass away from a heart attack because you don't have access to emergency services for a certain period of time. And so that could have been somebody, you know, that would've gone to the hospital.

Governor DeSantis ([28:39](#)):

So there's a lot of those things, uh, they're working through it and, um, we'll see. But I can, I can say I think Kevin, there's not been in these rescue efforts, um, you know, deceased people found as of yet. Now that may change of course as they, as they do more, but they've been able to, to lift a lot of people out of those islands. And I know a lot of those people have been happy, but increasingly there are people who are happy that people are out there looking out for 'em, but say, Thank you, you know, we're good. Um, you know, I, I don't know that that is necessarily, they're gonna want to do that over the long term because if there's structural damage for some of the underlying services, it's just gonna take a little longer for the utilities, uh, to be able to get that up and running. But nevertheless, that's the posture lot of them have taken. Go. Can

Reporter ([29:21](#)):

You give us a sense to that point? Can you give us a sense of what recovery's gonna look like in the hardest areas, especially in Lee County, it sounds like, um, are we talking about, you know, displacement for months and and months on end? Are they gonna be able to, um, are they gonna have to send their kids to different schools? Are there schools that are just not gonna be able to open for? Well,

Governor DeSantis ([29:40](#)):

I think they're all still assessing that. I think that they're looking to see, um, exactly how many people are gonna be displaced. Clearly, you know, you have some homes that were a total loss. There's no question about that. How many of those were rental homes? How many of those were permanent residents? Uh, I think people are still looking at how many of those were seasonal homes for seasonal residents. I think they're sorting all that out. Uh, as more people come forward, they are keeping the shelters open in Lee County in case people have been displaced and they need a place to stay. Obviously with FEMA offering individual assistance, people who are gonna need housing assistance are gonna be able to sign up and get that. So I think you'll have a better sense at that point. Um, but I, you know, my sense would be just

kind of looking at it, sanibel had some serious destruction, uh, and a lot of destruction on some of the, the underlying infrastructure, uh, which is obviously important.

Governor DeSantis (30:31):

I mean, they used to not have a bridge there. It would take like a ferry back and forth. Uh, you know, now you're back to kind of before that causeway was there, Fort Myers Beach, really, really serious, uh, uh, damage some of the other places. When you're in a helicopter looking over, I see the homes are intact. I didn't see massive debris in some of the neighborhoods, but you also don't know how much flood damage that they had because that water could have been four feet at this time yesterday, and then it's subsided. And so that will all be things I think that people will determine, um, as the days go on. But I think the folks in Lee, um, you know, are prepared for some level of displacement. And I know Kevin has worked and, and FEMA's worked, uh, on, on some solutions, but I don't know that we know exactly how many. Kevin, do you want to add about what you're seeing so far? Yeah,

Kevin Guthrie (31:16):

So I, I agree with the governor wholeheartedly on the, uh, damage assessment so far. You know, and again, this is aerial damage assessment flying into the area, flying around a little bit of the ground transportation that we were doing. Um, I, I, I will just add to it, you know, the, the next step in this recovery process is we will, uh, I say we, we in support of the local counties will open up points of distribution where we will have food, water, potentially ice, depending on the situation. And I want to manage that expectation. ICE is usually given to help keep, um, cold medications cold. So if that's a situation you will be given ice. Um, we will be providing tarps to those counties that have requested tarp so that they can do some emergency repairs. Uh, we are looking at turning on a program called the Blue Roof Program, which is a slightly different than a tarp through FEMA, and I'm sure FEMA will action that over to the US Army Corps.

Kevin Guthrie (32:08):

The next phase of that is gonna be the disaster recovery centers that we will open up in the individual counties. This is a place where, again, as the governor has mentioned before, we will team up with the CFO's office to have insurance villages. We will team up with, uh, individuals like Department of Economic opportunity to come in and, uh, help people with small business situations. We will, uh, team with the Department of Highway Safety Motor Vehicles, uh, the Department of Health, vital records, uh, ID cards, driver's licenses and things like that that have been lost. And the other state agency that's helped us out there is there's a laundry list of, uh, Human Services, Department of Elder Affairs, Veterans Affairs, Children's of Families and so on. So all of those will start to be set up over the next probably week or so. It just all depends on when we get, we can get water restored to Lee County and the impacted area, and when we can get power restored to the impacted area, as those things happen, we'll remove in very, uh, uh, quickly with recovery services. Um, you know, I don't wanna steal it from the governor, but the governor will be dispatching me to the area. We talked about this on the plane. I will probably be down in the area in the most impacted area for probably 30 days or more to ensure that the recovery is being handled to effectively and remove any type of bureaucratic issues that might be going on.

Reporter (33:25):

How many frequent conversation, uh, with the White House during this devastating time for Florida? What does it look like when the president comes to town? What's your plan?

Governor DeSantis (33:33):

Uh, I, I don't, I don't know if he's announced he's coming or not. I know that the FEMA administrator, she will be here tomorrow or if not today. Um, and so we'll be working, I don't know if she's planning on traveling with us on all our itinerary, but she's welcome to do that. Uh, we are gonna be back down in southwest Florida, but we're also working to see other impacted areas throughout the state, uh, to to, to go and potentially visit, meet with folks and see, see what they need. So, you know, at the end of the day, um, you know, I view this as something that you got folks that, that are in need. Uh, and local, federal, state, you know, we have a responsibility to work together. Uh, I'll tell you the way the, the, the locals have, have worked really hard. I mean, it's been really impressive to watch, uh, because this is not an easy thing to deal with.

Governor DeSantis (34:14):

It's also not an easy thing when you have, uh, forecasts over the map and you're not necessarily sure where it's going. Naples and Fort Myers were out of the, out of the cone 72 hours before the, before the storm actually made landfall. And as that changed, they pivoted and they put their plans in action. Uh, so it's been really good. And obviously Kevin and his team have done a great job. I mean, having so many things prepositioned, but, uh, every request we've, we've asked from, from fema, uh, has been approved. So, so we appreciate that. And, uh, we wanna make sure, So

Reporter (34:45):

You would plan on seeing him while he's in town no matter when

Governor DeSantis (34:49):

It's, Is he coming?

Reporter (34:50):

I, from what I understand, he will be here tomorrow.

Governor DeSantis (34:52):

Okay. Did you know that? Yes. Yeah. I don't know if that's case, the FEMA administrators here. Maybe. Maybe, maybe. So. We'll see. But I mean, at the end of the day, we want all the support that we can get. Uh, cuz we understand that there's a, there's a lot of need out there. And these are, these are good communities. You know, the thing is, is, uh, these are resilient folks. Uh, these are really, really good, good folks down there and, and they will bounce back. Uh, but we just need to make sure that we can kind of pave the way for 'em. All right, We'll see you guys in the morning. Thank you.