

Gov. DeSantis (00:00):

Open 800 bridges across the state. Uh, and this includes 67 high priority bridges, inspected and reopened in Lee Charlotte, Sarasota and Manatee Counties. Um, Pine Island, Sanibel, those are gonna be rebuild efforts. Uh, the Sanibel Bridge had, uh, breaks in multiple parts of it. It was not where the water and the pylons were. Those held up very well. It was where you had it, uh, on some of the sandbar, and that basically just got washed out from underneath. In the meantime, I think Kevin can talk about this. You know, he's gonna be, they're gonna be running barges to be able to bring more heavy equipment onto the island to be able to help, uh, with the response. The first responders that have been there, by and large, coming in via air, you know, they do have some equipment, uh, but they're traveling lighter just to be able to go and get to people quick as quickly as possible.

Gov. DeSantis (00:52):

There have been six healthcare facilities, uh, uh, evacuated in Southwest Florida. Uh, they were not, They were having problems with water or problems with power for an extended period of time. Uh, we're also prioritizing getting power and running potable water, uh, to the rest of the area's Health care facilities. There have been 117 facilities, uh, that had lost power, that now have power restored, Uh, the ports, Tampa Bay, Miami, Everglades, uh, they are reopened for fueling. Uh, and I think between today and tomorrow, all the ports in the state of Florida, uh, up and down the both coasts will be, uh, operational. Food and water, uh, massive amounts, and Kevin is sensitive to the water situation in Lee. So I'd say this is an extraordinary amount of, of water that has been staged and is continuing to be brought into, uh, the area. So FEMA has activated their individual assistance program.

Gov. DeSantis (01:48):

So if your need of help of recovering in those affected counties, you can go to disasterassistance.gov or call 1 800 621 3362. 1 800 621 3362. 34,000 people have already registered with FEMA. Uh, make sure if you are looking at claims on your property, you document that, take photos, make sure you have it. Uh, we want you to be able, uh, to be made whole as quickly as possible. Uh, there will be in conjunction with FEMA, uh, the State of Florida and the local communities, uh, what are called disaster recovery centers. Uh, you know, those will be set up, uh, very soon, and that will be a place, if you need help with things like individual assistance, you can go, Although, you know, Gracia will point out, you don't need to go there. You can do all this online. Uh, there's also gonna be Insurance Villages, uh, set up under the, uh, leadership of CFO, Jimmy Patronis.

Gov. DeSantis (02:43):

You're gonna have a lot of flood insurance claims as a result of this. You know, you will have, um, some wind claims as a result of this. And it's our view that, you know, these claims need to be paid very quickly so that people can get back on their feet. I want to thank the First Lady for spearheading our efforts for Volunteer Florida and activate the Florida Disaster Fund where people can donate. If you want to contribute, uh, you will be joining, a lot of people who've done a lot of money, and we now have over \$12 million with, you know, 24 to 36 hours after the storm hits. Uh, pretty, uh, pretty incredible that, that's happened. If you wanna do, go to [Floridadisasterfund.org](https://floridadisasterfund.org), [Floridadisasterfund.org](https://floridadisasterfund.org). Um, more than 12 million has come in and there's a lot of interest to do a lot more.

Gov. DeSantis (03:31):

Why is that important? You know, FEMA has certain things they can do via statute regulation, but if it falls outside of that, they just can't do it. That's not the way it works. And so, when you enlist private

organizations, they can be a little bit more nimble. They can tailor their response to maybe some of the more unique needs that citizens may have. And, and obviously, you, you have people that have been dislocated. You, you have people that no longer have homes, Uh, and so there's gonna be a wide variety of things, uh, that they're gonna need, uh, in the coming days, weeks, and months. Volunteer Florida, if you wanna volunteer your time, visit www.volunteerflorida.org to find volunteer opportunities. I, I think this is one way where you can really make an impact. And I know people really appreciate, uh, all the outpouring of support.

Gov. DeSantis ([04:22](#)):

Uh, I want to commend the folks, uh, that we were able to meet with down in southwest Florida. You know, this has been a, a, a major, uh, event, of course, and these people have been working around the clock, uh, to be able to serve their, their constituents and serve their communities. And we appreciate the dedication. We appreciate, uh, the perseverance. Uh, we know that there's a lot of difficult days ahead, uh, but they've really done a great job, uh, standing up for the people of their community. Um, I'm gonna let Kevin give a brief, uh, on the state response, Uh, and then we'll have the FEMA administrator, uh, come up and provide some perspective from fema.

Dir. Guthrie ([04:57](#)):

Thank you, Governor. So, I, I'll obviously thanking the governor, but I want to thank the, uh, agencies represented here to my left, Uh, especially show, uh, FEMA administrator, Deanne Criswell, Captain Rooney and Admiral, uh, Brendan McPherson from, uh, the United States Coast Guard, others that are not here, that are certainly on that floor behind me, Lieutenant Colonel Miller from the US Army Corps District, out Jacksonville, Colonel Booth out of Jacksonville, and, and many, many other federal partners that have certainly helped us here. Um, Colonel, or I'm sorry, Captain, if you can just grab that easel and just put it right back up here for just a second. I'd appreciate it. I wanted to thank them before I, um, covered them up with a sign here in just a second. So, all right. So let's talk. Uh, we're right in that 72 hour area of search, secure, stabilized that I talked about yesterday.

Dir. Guthrie ([05:47](#)):

So everything that I wanna talk about right now is about that search, secure, and stabilize. So we continue to have, uh, our fire, uh, rescue partners, search and rescue going in there and, uh, conducting the, uh, what we call the hasty search. And then they're coming back and do their primary search, and then they'll do a secondary search. So, again, I think it's very important for everybody to know that's a part of the search and rescue element. Over a 72 hour period, there's actually three searches that are conducted. That hasty search is just very quick. See if they see any, uh, survivors that are alive or in a traumatic situation, and they start to move those individuals to safety that's been conducted. Now we're back in that primary search area, which is now we're doing a little more detailed search, and then we'll do a second search behind that.

Dir. Guthrie ([06:35](#)):

Stay safe. I want people to be, make sure that they are safe. This comes down to personal preparedness, or I shouldn't say personal preparedness, but the person individual response. Generator safety. We have been talking about it and talking about it and talking about it, but we still get reports of people operating their generators inside of a garage operating our generators just out of, outside of a cracked window with a cord running through the window. And we're having continued issues with carbon monoxide. All right? I'm not saying we've had carbon monoxide deaths, I'm just saying that we are still

having carbon monoxide issues. Please operate your generators in a safe mode. That also includes not having electrical cords actually run through puddles of water. Let's make sure that we got them elevated and not running through puddles of water. Next, as I mentioned last night, chainsaw safety, ladder safety, wire safety.

Dir. Guthrie ([07:30](#)):

If you don't know what it is, don't cut it. If you don't know how to cut it, don't cut it. Let the professionals come in and do that. We have more than 2000 resource requests from our impacted local partners, and more than 1700 are in process or completed. I think there's a very important bullet to note here. A lot of counties put in mission requests for bulk food and water when we had a 45, 50 county disaster. Now we have counties starting to cancel their food and water. So when we say 2000 and 1700, we have this 300 gap. I wanted people to understand there were 2000 mission request. We're filling 1700. Some of those are going to be organically canceled because they're not impacted at the county level. We've mobilized more than 14,000 gallons of diesel to Fort Myers for a water plant to provide water to nearby hospitals.

Dir. Guthrie ([08:28](#)):

We've deployed two for, uh, Hernando County, uh, fire into Hernando County Sheriff, uh, sheriff's staff to use drones for photography and video of flooded areas into Soto County. And I wanna make sure that I take this time to say thank you to our restoration crews who have been able to take 500,000 individuals and get them power back. We're down to 1.9 million in the power restoration area that still need to be restored. Again, thank you to our first responders. I wanna bring in, we're starting to get some questions about food and distribution points. So I'm gonna ask Brian to give me this, uh, this graphic that we've made here. And I think this is important for a couple of reasons. We talk about a family personal preparedness plan. So what we've done here, we are in day number two, three of the response disaster.

Dir. Guthrie ([09:27](#)):

This is where your personal family plan is being executed. This is why we've asked. We partner with FEMA on this. Have three to seven days of water. We talk, you hear me talk a lot about five to seven in Florida. So again, days one through five personal family plan. This is the food and water that you had. Now, we do have food and water at shelters, if you go into a shelter, the next phase of this, you'll see is an orange. This moves us from the family plan over into the National Guard and local community level point, a distribution plan that will run for somewhere between 72 hours and about 120 hours. So three to five days. So as we exit that, again, we're way back over here, we will then come in with mass feeding kitchens. Those mass feeding kitchens will be designed to provide those hot meals three times a day to the most impacted communities that still don't have food and water.

Dir. Guthrie ([10:25](#)):

We are getting some questions of first ladies getting some questions, and I wanna make sure that we take the opportunity to educate individuals as a part of how everything ties together. So again, personal plan, National Guard food distribution plan, which is water and dry food at our points of distribution. And then we'll move into a hot feeding kitchen plan. So I thought it was important for everybody to understand how that connects and that as we continue to get questions about that, where is your government today? We are in the process of moving National Guard to the bulk food has gotten to those two locations, the governor's already mentioned. Now we're moving down to the community

plan, which is that local national Guard element that's gonna go up and set that up. I'm working with Lee County today, which is obviously the most impacted county.

Dir. Guthrie ([11:15](#)):

They have eight community pods that will be opening hopefully in some, uh, form or fashion, moving cars through them later today in eight locations. I'm gonna let Sandra take the lead on announcing those locations at the local level for her staff so that, uh, when they're ready, we're ready. But I wanna make sure we tie all that together. Last thing I wanna talk about now is, as individuals start to move debris to their curbside, you must, you must separate it into piles. My, uh, communications team will be giving graphics at another, uh, update today at the five o'clock or this evening update. We will tell people how to separate their debris into piles. But if you're doing it now, vegetation needs to be in its own pile. Structural, this is food, or I'm sorry, I'm structural, is furniture, building materials, plumbing issues that needs to be in a separate pile.

Dir. Guthrie ([12:14](#)):

Then we call it household hazardous waste. These are your comp, your com, your cleaning supplies, your batteries, your pesticides. Anything that's hazardous goes into its own pile. Electronics, TVs, computers, things of that nature go into its own pile. And the last pile is what we call white goods or appliances need to go in a separate pile. So, again, recapping, that's vegetation, structural household, hazardous waste, electronics and appliances. As always, when moving stuff, if it is too heavy, get help. These are, these are absolutely avoidable deaths and absolutely avoidable injuries. Get people to help you. We have many faith-based community groups. We have Team Rubicon individuals willing to help you to get that stuff to the roadside. So please be safe. Use gloves, use goggles, Make sure you're wearing boots. Make sure you look for power lines that may be mixed up in all of this debris. Thank you for allowing me to do a little extended briefing today and provide you a little more detail. We'll be back to this afternoon with some more information. And as always, governor, thank you very much for your leadership.

Admin. Griswell ([13:28](#)):

All right, thank you, Governor. Thank you first for allowing me to join you here today. And I'd also like to recognize my regional administrator, Gracia Lecheck. She has been on the ground since before this storm hit, working side by side with Director Guthrie. Um, but it's not just that. Our regional office works with the state of Florida and all the states within Region four throughout the year to make sure that we are planning, we are coordinated, and that when we have an event like this, we can seamlessly move into assist and support the state with their needs. Uh, what we have done, um, prior to landfall is we did stage a lot of search and rescue resources to support the great efforts that have been happening here, um, in the state of Florida. We have those resources available as the state needs it. Um, and we've also begun to move in food and water into those points of distribution to support what you just heard, um, from Director Guthrie, um, and the governor, uh, what I wanna say is we are here to support.

Admin. Griswell ([14:21](#)):

FEMA is here to support these ongoing efforts right now to continue the life saving missions that are, are still ongoing, but also to begin to support the recovery mission. Uh, as you heard the governor say, the President did declare a major disaster declaration for individual assistance as well as public assistance. Public assistance is gonna allow us to reimburse a lot of the costs for the first responders who have been doing an amazing job, allow us to reimburse some of their overtime costs for all of the work that they've been doing to stabilize this incident. And on the individual assistance side, right now,

there are 13 counties that have been designated for individual assistance, but we will add more as we continue to do assessments. And it has it been safe to go into those neighborhoods. We will continue to add more counties so individuals can apply for assistance through FEMA.

Admin. Griswell ([15:07](#)):

And I just wanna reiterate how you can do that. You can go to disasterassistance.gov. You can call 1 800 621 3362. Or you can go to our FEMA app. I also wanna, um, let people know that we are gonna have teams of individuals that are going into the shelters to help them register for assistance. Right now, we know that many people are away from their home. They may not have access to the internet. They may not have access on their cell phone. And so we're gonna send teams to go into the shelters to begin that recovery process for them. Uh, governor, I just wanna commit to you and on behalf of the president, we are here to support this recovery. We know we're still in a very active response stage. We're gonna go into the stabilization, but we've already started planning for what the recovery is going to be because we know that this is gonna be a very complicated and complex recovery. We wanna make sure that we have the right resources. So I appreciate the opportunity to join you today. So I can see firsthand what some of the needs are. I've brought recovery and response personnel with me to make sure that we are bringing the right resources to support the governor's needs and what his concerns are. So thank you very much.

Gov. DeSantis ([16:15](#)):

Okay, Any questions? You

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

I got two quick ones. Uh, first of all, do we have an update on casualties? And second of all, obviously you're meeting with the administrator today. What are you asking for? What is the state of Florida need from fema?

Gov. DeSantis ([16:26](#)):

Well, I think the, the, the number one thing that, that we needed, you know, that they provided, which was the Army Corps, to support Lee County and, and their water situation, uh, critical, critical and get that infrastructure back up and running. Uh, you look at this storm, you know, obviously there was really significant damage, but you also have a lot of folks who had minimal or, or maybe no damage and getting them back, you know, make sure they're in their homes, they have the running water, uh, the electrical, all of that is gonna make all the other efforts, uh, so much better. So, so we appreciate that. But I think that is probably the, the number one priority. Kevin, would you say that that's probably the number one priority? And you know, the Army Corps, they're the subject matter experts, and so hopefully they get a diagnosis and then they can plan and, and, and the county can go and fix it. I'll let Kevin talk about, uh, the other.

Dir. Guthrie ([17:15](#)):

So where we stand right now on fatalities is, uh, I'll break this down, Um, by county, we have one confirmed fatality in Polk County. We have 12 unconfirmed fatalities in, uh, Charlotte County. We have 8 unconfirmed fatalities in Collier County. And we are still processing through the situation with the hasty search that I mentioned before in Lee County. Now, let me talk about confirmation and unconfirmed. People die in disasters that have nothing to do with the disaster, right? So the medical examiner is the one that makes that determination. They are the lead agency at the local level to

determine when they investigate that this is either disaster related or not disaster related, if it is determined to be disaster related. You've heard the governor and I talk about this now for about three or four days. It is a direct death.

Dir. Guthrie ([18:13](#)):

In other words, storm surge, rising water, things of that nature or indirect, these stuff that led up to it after the fact. So with that being said, we have 12 unconfirmed fatalities in, uh, Charlotte County. We have 8 unconfirmed fatalities in Collier County. We have one confirmed fatality in, um, in Polk County. So that brings us up to 21 total. We do have an identified situation, uh, that was done during the hasty search, um, of, of some fatalities. Um, we do not know exactly how many were in the house. And, and let me paint the picture for you. The water was up over the rooftop, right? But we had a Coast guard rescue swimmer swim down into it, and he could identify there, it appeared to be, uh, human remains. We do not know exactly how many, We do not know what the situation is.

Dir. Guthrie ([19:10](#)):

And before we comment on that, we, you know, we wanna be transparent, but we just don't know that number. And we got a couple of other situations where we had that particular type situation. So right now, the number we're going with is we have 21. We have identified a situation for sure that we know we got something in, but until the water recedes and we get the special equipment, again, we've gotta have special equipment to get in there. And as the governor's already talked about, is we can't get that over there. So I'll take just a point of privilege there and talk about that. We've got a 20 by 40 foot sput barge that's now been delivered that we can now start traversing some heavier equipment. Um, and in the search world rescue, this is called Hackney. These are basically, um, like beer delivery trucks, Soto delivery trucks that have specialized equipment that we can get on that sput barge, get it on the, uh, land the other side, and start doing some really technical type of rescue. Once we get to that point, then we can probably give you some better numbers. But where we're at today is 21, 1 confirmed, 20 unconfirmed.

Reporter ([20:12](#)):

I have a question for 30 on, um, the survey. Governor, you mentioned that there were about 20,000 people that had responded to the survey, 10,000 were contacted and they were fine. Does that mean that 10,000 have not responded and they're not okay, or

Dir. Guthrie ([20:29](#)):

That, that's not what that means. Um, so for instance, right now we have about 14,000 people just in Lee County, I believe it is. Well, I'm sorry, across the, across the three counties, we've got about 14,000 people in shelters. So, um, we are now, we, we, we did an automation of collecting data. We are now at a point where in this 10,000 is we're physically having to find people. Do they have communications? Can we get them on the cell phone. In the hardest hit impacted area, we may not have cell phone capability. So we are trying to, it's gonna take us some time. If you guys recall back when I was here for Hurricane Michael, we had over 30,000 people. And then we whittled that down to 3000, and then we whittled it down to 300. And that just happened organically over time. But if you recall, between indirect and direct desks for Hurricane Michael, I think we only had 77.

Dir. Guthrie ([21:18](#)):

So that number's gonna continue to squeeze itself down, down, down. As we have the ability to get into shelters and find people that are registered inside of shelters, people will register via the FEMA app, FEMA website on the phone with FEMA, person to person with FEMA. And then we'll start to be able to whittle those numbers down between federal data, between state data, between local data and we'll, that, that number will continue to, to shrink. But again, we are way ahead, way ahead of where we were at for Hurricane Michael when I was here on this floor for that two, we were 30,000 weeks into that situation, we're down to less than 10,000. We're only day number two. So that, that number is gonna continue to come down drastically.

Reporter ([21:59](#)):

So that, that 10,000 number, uh, just maybe a combination of whether they're missing out contact out of power, not the location might be, might have changed or what exactly. Right. How would you consider the categories? So

Dir. Guthrie ([22:14](#)):

All, all the affirmation, uh, and, and for those that didn't hear the question, what categories will we put this into? Those without power, those without communications, those that are just trying to still reconnect loved ones. The, at the end of the day, it's all of those categories, but again, we will shrink that, that will organically shrink day by day. Um, that the, the pod that's right behind me, 30 feet behind me are human services. There are no, there are people that are dedicated to doing nothing but that and take the information that comes from urban search and rescue and connect to that data and whittling that list down.

Reporter ([22:47](#)):

So we have a number of missing people at this point in time right

Dir. Guthrie ([22:51](#)):

So again, missing people is a local law enforcement jurisdiction. All right, So if you want to ask questions about what are the missing person numbers, that's gotta be a local county sheriff or a local law enforcement ask.

Reporter ([23:08](#)):

Governor, speaking of, uh, county sheriffs, uh, appreciate the, um, transparency on casualties. Do you think the message that the Lee County Sheriff put out, uh, was premature or makes your messaging more difficult?

Gov. DeSantis ([23:22](#)):

Look, I mean, I think, you know, these are stressful situations. I think that when you have a storm like that bearing down, um, on your community and then obviously hitting the community, uh, you know, people were going through that, they're working, but you know, you kinda have a lump in your throat cuz you just don't know what's gonna happen. And I think that, um, that that was done because there's concern for the wellbeing of the people of Lee County. And there's a concern, uh, of the damage, uh, that the storm has done. I mean, clearly, you know, it's, it's packed a big wall up. Um, you know, when you look at some of these things like you see a house totally washed out, It's just nothing but a concrete slab on Fort Myers Beach. Uh, you know, you just pray to God that no one, no one was in that.

Gov. DeSantis (24:02):

Because, you know, some of these things, you know, these people on Sanibel that have the real big houses, they, they could hunker down and, and it'll pass and their, their homes are raised. And so the surge, they're probably protected from, uh, some of these others, uh, particularly some of the older construction didn't stand a chance in that. And so you just hope that those were folks that, um, that, that had left or that those, those structures were not occupied. So I think it was just about, uh, you know, the concern for, for what they were facing and, uh, the fact that, you know, you did have people that, that as the storm was in process, you know, there were people that, that, that were really concerned with what they were seeing with the water rising, um, and whatnot. I am though, I think, um, and I think Kevin would agree as the, the search and the rescue folks have gone to a lot of these areas, you know, fortunately you're not finding like desperate people waving, you know, saying that you, it's usually, you know, there's some people that are brought off the island, they're thankful, but many of these people on Sanibel some are saying we're fine.

Gov. DeSantis (25:00):

Thanks for coming by and doing that. So, so there's obviously, there's gonna be more that happens in the next few days. Uh, but I do think the response was very, very quick. Uh, I think it absolutely has made a huge difference. And if you just look at where are we at in rescues now? I mean, we're over 700 rescues.

Dir. Guthrie (25:17):

We're over 700,000 rescues. But, um, uh, the CFO's office has over 3000 touch points. So I think that's a report number. We've made contact with 3000 people in the field, touchpoint in the field, and actually rescued 700, sir.

Gov. DeSantis (25:30):

Yeah. So, but, but this is ongoing. Those guys have worked really hard and especially you think about who was the first one to get over there, literally driving through tropical storm across Alligator Alley was, uh, taskforce two outta Miami, and who was taskforce two? When did we see them last in a public way? We saw 'em at the surf side disaster. We saw the task force one there and many other task forces from around the state and the country that came in. Uh, so when they're doing this, it's, it's obviously important work. Uh, but, but these are not easy missions to be doing on. I mean, it was not easy for them to be on that pile and surf surfside and search for people. And unfortunately, you know, find many, many people, uh, who were killed in that collapse. And so now they're in a situation, you know, where they're looking and, and hopefully they find people that are okay or that, that the buildings are empty. Um, but, you know, you don't want have to see people that had gone, uh, that that didn't make it through. And so, so it's, it's a physical, it's, it's putting yourself out there in harm's way, but it does also take a toll. And Kevin, why don't you talk about the mental health that we are doing in here?

Dir. Guthrie (26:37):

Sure. So, uh, in the mental health category, um, that this, if you recall, uh, very early on in the DeSantis administration, First Lady Casey DeSantis took on the role of providing for first responder mental health to include of hiring the first ever in the division, a state mental health coordinating officer. So, uh, Sarah Newhouse is our state mental health coordinating officer, she is housed here in the division, uh, of emergency management, has a bifurcated chain of command me on a day to day basis. But in a disaster situation, she reports directly to the First Lady to help coordinate those disaster mental health services,

not only for disaster mental health in general, but even more importantly, focused on first responder mental health. So you're gonna see already there are already embedded, uh, what we call critical in stress management teams or CISM teams for short. Those are already on site, and you're gonna continue to see first responder mental health resources come into the area, including, uh, FEMA's, uh, first responder mental health services, as well as, uh, individual mental health services as well as ours. So again, it's, we have a person, I'm titled the State Coordinating Officer, to coordinate all of these state agencies that respond to a disaster. But we have a person that just takes a subset of mental health. And is that state Mental Health Coordinating officer that works under me and underneath the First Lady for disaster Mental Health. Okay.