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Date: 2/16/2016 12:08:45 PM

Subject: FYSA- Media Monitoring Report for DR 4241 SC 02/16/16

Attachments: 021616 MM Report for DR-4241-SC.docx

FYSA- Media Monitoring Report for DR 4241 SC 02/16/16

NEWS CLIPS

SOUTH CAROLINA-DR-4241

Feb. 16, 2016

Issues:

- None.

Summary:

- **Recent flooding in Horry County** is the focus of a report on **WMBF-TV in Myrtle Beach**. The local emergency management director tells the station the state and county would have to meet “thresholds” that would merit consideration for a federal disaster declaration. He also says funding for HMGP projects could take up to two years.
- Charlotte, NC station **WSOC-TV** filed its report about flood damage in communities along the Gills Creek Watershed in the Columbia area, focusing on one specific disaster survivor who has struggled to rebuild. The reporter had visited the JFO on Jan. 20 and interviewed FCO Mike Moore and SCO Kim Stenson.

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Floods

No FEMA Assistance Available For Recent River Flooding (WMBF-TV)

By Amy Lipman

[WMBF-TV Myrtle Beach \(SC\)](#), February 15, 2016

HORRY COUNTY, SC (WMBF) – River water continues to fill the yards of homes along the Waccamaw River

and while these smaller flooding events are tragic for the people going through them, FEMA can't come in to help.

The only way for FEMA to get involved in the flooding going on now is for Horry County to rack up \$30 million in damages, Horry County Emergency Management Director Randy Webster said.

The federal threshold for assistance is usually \$6 million for the county and \$30 million statewide, but because the rest of the state isn't dealing with too many flooding issues, the county would have to meet that state threshold by itself.

Webster said people are still getting FEMA assistance from the declared disaster in October.

The process for FEMA hazard mitigation grants has started. However, Webster said FEMA takes two years to even give a decision on funding projects, such as raising a house, and people often can't wait that long to get an answer.

If a house is out of code compliance, flood insurance could pay for some hazard mitigation projects.

"People in the area are looking for immediate relief, but it's just not there and there's no other programs I'm aware of as far as local government or state government or federal government that's really there at this point," Webster said.

Webster said flood insurance is a homeowner's best bet for the flooding going on now and in the future.

The county is working to get people lower flood insurance premiums. The county's community rating system, or CRS, is up for review this year. CRS ranks the county's preparedness for flood-related disasters. Webster believes Horry County will be able to move up from a 9 to an 8, which would save people money on their flood insurance next year if that's approved.

Lives Still Hang In the Balance after Historic Floods (WSOC-TV)

By Greg Suskin

[WSOC-TV Charlotte \(NC\)](#), February 12, 2016

COLUMBIA, S.C. —

It was the worst disaster that some parts of South Carolina had ever seen: a thousand-year flood.

Four months after nearly 2 feet of rain pounded the state, taking lives and sweeping away dreams, many are still suffering.

Jennifer Gneiser took Channel 9 inside her home, which had 4 feet of water in it. Volunteers from across the country are tiling her floor, installing sheet rock and doing electrical work on her home.

"I woke to see the water halfway up my yard," Gneiser said.

That was Oct. 4. It had been raining all night.

"I got out. I had to come back later in a boat to get my dog," she said. "Everyone's house was covered."

Nineteen people died in South Carolina. Thousands were left homeless, and 500 roads and bridges were damaged or wiped out.

Four months later, Mike Moore is still in Columbia, leading the Federal Emergency Management Agency's efforts to help victims.

"This was a big disaster," Moore said. "Thirty-six of the 46 counties in the state were designated disaster areas."

A federal deadline passed for victims to apply for government aid passed in early January.

FEMA distributes millions of dollars in assistance

In all, 101,603 people applied for aid from FEMA, and the agency has doled out \$83.5 million. Most of that money – \$72.3 million – went for emergency housing.

Gneiser lost everything, and got some of that government help, but the FEMA check didn't go very far.

"You don't know where to start. It's a mess," she said. "FEMA gave me two months' rent."

An issue with her flood insurance meant that it didn't cover her losses.

It looks like time has stood still in her neighborhood. Piles of trash, bedding and appliances are left to the elements, and boarded-up homes are visible everywhere.

Many of the homes still have large storage pods parked in the driveways, holding whatever families could save.

The storm dumped 20 inches of rain in the area, and more than 20 dams were breached.

Businesses took a beating too.

Not far away on Garner's Ferry Road, the severe damage is still very clear. A title loan business is in ruins, and a damaged Subway restaurant is boarded up. Behind that, two big-box stores, Marshalls and PetSmart, are still closed for repairs.

Signs are posted in the windows, telling customers to visit other stores.

Kim Stenson, who heads the state's emergency management agency, told Channel 9 that life is turning around for

some.

“A lot of the people are recovering very well, and getting back to normal,” he said.

Nonprofit groups work to get people back in their homes

But for others, it’s a struggle. FEMA does not pay to rebuild homes or do major repairs. Most government assistance is a stopgap, not a complete fix.

Michela Schildts is with the St. Bernard Project, one of more than a dozen nonprofit groups working in the area. Her agency is from a New Orleans parish devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

The St. Bernard Project is busy rebuilding 10 homes. Government agencies like FEMA are linking storm victims to volunteer groups like the St. Bernard Project, who can do what it can’t.

“We see a lot of despair. We see a lot of destruction,” Schildts said.

Volunteers are performing thousands of dollars’ worth of repairs, in some cases \$40,000 worth on homes, all from gifts and donations.

Months after the devastation, the worst problem is mold, which gets worse with time. Many low-income families are staying in moldy homes. FEMA money can’t be used for professional mold removal in most cases.

“They’re having to stay in these houses, literally sleeping underneath a ceiling with mold on it, and in a bed that has mold on it, because they have nowhere else to go,” Schildts said.

Gneiser will get her home back in just a few weeks. She’ll need all new furniture and appliances. Still, she’s grateful for what so many strangers are doing to give her life back.

“I can’t put into words enough how much I appreciate what they’ve done,” she said.

Homes damaged beyond repair torn down

The first house in the neighborhood was demolished the day before Channel 9 arrived to do a story on the recovery. Others will follow because many are simply too damaged – 50 percent or more – to get building permits.

Kimara London lived two doors down from Gneiser with her mother. They are staying in a camper in the driveway while their home is repaired.

“It’s really sad to see a house torn down just yesterday,” she said.

That’s not all she’s seen in the last few weeks. Strangers in white work vans have been driving down her street, walking around homes and posing as HVAC repair crews.

She called her neighbor, who no longer lives next door, to ask if she’d called anyone to do any work.

“These men told me they were there at her request to look at her AC unit. She told me she hadn’t called anyone. I think people are looting and stealing,” London said.

The long-term recovery effort will go on for months. The federal disaster recovery coordinator is working to determine what kinds of continuing support are needed, and which federal agencies will stay involved across the state.

Gneiser said what she needs most is someone to talk to. Many of the houses around her are empty, and she doesn’t expect her neighbors to come back.

“The struggle isn’t over for anybody, by any means,” she said.

TV/Radio Clips



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA on WMBF (NBC) - Myrtle Beach, SC

02/15/2016 16:04:17

WMBF News at 4 (News)

... the horry county emergency management director says fema can't come in to help. amy lipman found out what options homeowners do have while they continue to deal with flooding. ...



FEMA. on WMBF (NBC) - Myrtle Beach, SC

02/16/2016 05:04:19

WMBF News Today at 5 am (News)

... head to the south carolina department of revenue's website. we're learning that fema cant step in and help.....as river water continues to fill the yards of homes along the waccamaw river....

(click thumbnail to play)



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA. on WMBF (NBC) - Myrtle Beach, SC

02/16/2016 06:41:24

WMBF News Today at 6:30 AM (News)

... ourbu shinoemss---in the last few weeks, don't plan on seeing any assistance from fema. i'll let you know why--- there is rea--wen it comes to getting financial help. and speaking of flooding, we ...



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA on WMBF (NBC) - Myrtle Beach, SC

02/16/2016 06:50:22

WMBF News Today at 6:30 AM (News)

... waccamaw river... but residents will see no help from fema... the horry county emergency management director says.... the federal threshold for assistance is usually 6 million ...



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA. on WSOC-CLT (ABC) - Charlotte, NC

02/12/2016 17:44:55

Eyewitness News at 5:30 (News)

... or wiped out. more than 100,000 people applied for aid from fema and the agency doled out more than 83 million. most of it for housing. jennifer lost everything. ...



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA on WSOC-CLT (ABC) - Charlotte, NC

02/12/2016 17:45:58

Eyewitness News at 5:30 (News)

... back to normal. >> for others it's a struggle. fema doesn't pay to rebuild or do major repairs. most government assistance is a stopgap not a complete fix. >> we see a lot of despair, we ...