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Subject: 10.24.15 Afternoon Media Monitoring Report for DR-4241-SC

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FYSA-10.24.15 Afternoon Media Monitoring Report for DR-4241-SC

NEWS CLIPS

SOUTH CAROLINA-DR-4241

10/24/15

Afternoon

Issues:

- None.

Summary:

- This afternoon, The (Columbia) State posted its video story that was shot while accompanying a FEMA home inspection tour on Thursday. Most of the other news outlets that were on that tour had broadcast their stories Thursday evening.
- The State (Columbia) reports that thousands of dams across South Carolina go uninspected by state regulators every year because they're not considered significant enough to warrant government oversight. But experts say some of these unregulated dams pose risks to people and property because they can cave during massive rains, just like many did on Oct. 4 Story is accompanied by video of a woman who lived below one of the dams that broke earlier this month.
- Georgetown goes to normal operating status, OPCON 5; Myrtle Beach Sun News/Myrtle Beach Online takes a look at what that means while also covering the presence of DRCs and other general recovery activity
- Williamsburg County requires people to have a FEMA registration ID to obtain goods and services for flood relief, similar to some other agencies, such as Red Cross.
- Five Columbia police officers sustained flood losses; community drive is helping them
- Myrtle Beach Sun News is the latest media outlet to examine the terrible year it's been for South Carolina farmers, which saw first a drought and then the flood.
- Those involved in current anti-litter drive in Orangeburg area point out that a lot of drainage problems that contributed to flood damage this month were worsened by garbage blocking flows, including appliances and tires
- The Charleston Post and Courier used the FEMA news release about aid being available to homeowners at the Summerville Home Depot
- "Tunnel to Towers" gives \$20,000 in Home Depot cards to Guard families affected by flooding
- Famously Hot New Year's Eve celebration's economic boost to Columbia is especially welcome this year following flood, flag controversy and Charleston shootings tragedy

Analysis:

- Dominating clips today is The (Columbia) State's big weekend examination of unregulated dams. Also, The State was the most recent media outlet to publish its product from the FEMA home inspection tour that several reporters and videographers attended on Thursday. Otherwise, a slow news day.

Social Listening Analysis:

- **FEMA.** Conversations regarding FEMA and the flooding are minimal, with a decline in overall posts that may be due to a typical drop in activity over the weekend.

- **Community relief.** Volunteers from around the community are reporting on [community relief activities](#) in the region and encouraging people in need to [visit their distribution sites](#). Most relief activities center around the collection and distribution of goods, primarily organized by local groups such as [churches](#) or [school](#) teams.
- **Clean up.** Affected residents are sharing images and information about clean up tasks they are undertaking this weekend at their homes. Many of these residents are sharing positive sentiments about getting the rebuilding process underway, while still [stressing the need for materials](#) and recovery help. Mold continues to be a common topic among homeowners and [organizations](#) sharing posts about their progress.

Floods

VIDEO: Flood victim recalls memories of her home during FEMA assessment

Thousands of dams avoid state inspections in South Carolina

Georgetown switches Operating Conditions to normal, disaster recovery centers opening

Williamsburg County requires FEMA ID number to receive services, goods

FEMA to offer home improvement tips at Summerville Home Depot

Residents affected by flood available for food assistance

Litter Free Week effort aims for cleaner county

For local farmers still reeling from drought, flood struck at worst time

Weekly Observations: Asking for help and saying thanks

Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation donates to support SC National Guard

Friends, community aid police officers hit by floods

Famously Hot New Year to bring economic boost

New Hampshire hosts summit on coastal flooding

Floods

VIDEO: Flood victim recalls memories of her home during FEMA assessment

The State (Columbia), Oct. 24, 2015

Kimberly Anne Sonnenfeld was a resident of Glenhaven Drive in Columbia South Carolina when it was submerged in flood water. She escaped with only a small bag of possessions and her dog. She didn't even have a pair of matching shoes after the flood. She credits FEMA for helping her get back on her feet. Matt Walsh/ The State Media Co.

Thousands of dams avoid state inspections in South Carolina

By Sammy Fretwell

The State (Columbia), Oct. 24, 2015

Highlights

State has 10,000 to 20,000 unregulated dams

Some failed during the historic storm this month

Experts suggest putting some smaller dams under state regulation

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Accompanying [video](#):

Lack of regulation on Pine Tree Lake dam concerns flood victims --

Melissa Stang lived near the foot of the Pine Tree Lake dam. During the first day of the flood, the Pine Tree Lake dam was one of several dams in the Gills Creek watershed that breached. She was trapped in an upper floor of her home and water flooding into her home destroyed most of her belongings.

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COLUMBIA, SC — Thousands of dams across South Carolina go uninspected by state regulators every year because the structures aren't considered significant enough to warrant government oversight.

But experts say some of these unregulated dams pose risks to people and property if they fail – particularly in urban areas like Columbia, where a massive rain storm Oct. 4 broke numerous dams.

During the historic flooding, as many as 23 dams in the Columbia area buckled under the pressure of rushing

water, contributing to the overall flooding that swamped homes, washed out roads and forced evacuations of neighborhoods.

State officials acknowledge that at least four of those dams were not regulated by the state, including a northeast Richland dam believed to have sent water gushing down Jackson Creek toward Decker Boulevard and into Cary Lake. The dam holding back water at 56-acre Cary Lake also burst during the storm.

Unregulated dams are a problem in many places, experts say.

“There probably are hundreds if not thousands of dams out there (nationally) that are currently unregulated that ought to be regulated for one reason or another,” said Bruce Tschantz, a former chief of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s dam safety office

Across the state, the S.C. Emergency Management Division estimates there are 10,000 to 20,000 dams that are not regulated by government dam safety programs. The figure is down from the 48,000 estimate the agency once gave, but still significant in light of the number of dams the state does regulate.

All told, South Carolina oversees safety on 2,400 dams that fall under its regulatory program because they reach a specific height or hold a certain amount of water. Federal agencies oversee a handful of major dams, such as at Lake Murray, as well as those on the Army’s Fort Jackson training base.

In the Columbia area’s Gills Creek watershed, where more than 100,000 people live, a recent consulting report said more than 100 lakes dot the area stretching from northeast Richland to areas southeast of Columbia.

But many of the dams holding back those lakes apparently receive no state oversight. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ national dam inventory lists just 112 regulated dams in all of Richland County, nearly one-quarter of which are in the Gills Creek watershed.

Not all unregulated dams are dangerous, said Tschantz and Steve Bradley, who led South Carolina’s dam safety program before retiring about four years ago. Like Tschantz, Bradley said some of those dams hold back small farm ponds or aren’t near enough people to be a threat if they broke.

Still, Bradley agreed that some dams not regulated and inspected by the state deserve scrutiny. He estimated up to 1,000 unregulated dams in South Carolina could use some level of oversight by government agencies.

While running the dam safety program at the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, Bradley said he recalled at times looking at aerial photographs and thinking “we ought to be regulating this dam.”

A DHEC spokeswoman said last week that the department is working with an engineering consultant to determine whether some dams not under its authority should be regulated.

That could prove difficult.

Bradley said the agency barely has enough people to keep up with the dams it does regulate. At one point during his tenure, Bradley said he was the only staff member at DHEC specifically overseeing dams.

Asked about the possibility of putting more dams under state regulation, Bradley offered: “I don’t know how you could.”

Cash strapped program

DHEC has in recent years had one of the most poorly funded dam safety offices in the country.

The state program was robust when it was part of the old Land Resources Commission, former officials say. But when the Legislature restructured government in the early 1990s, the dam safety program was put under DHEC’s control.

The program began to suffer from budget cuts and gradually eroded, Bradley and other former dam safety officials said. In 2014, the program had a budget of \$260,000.

The lack of resources led to criticism that DHEC wasn’t keeping close track of dams the agency regulates.

In the wake of this month’s floods, Gov. Nikki Haley and DHEC officials say they now are reviewing the program after more than three dozen dams failed across South Carolina. The agency has hired HDR Engineering, an international engineering and architectural company, to help it assess the dam safety program and any needed improvements.

Under South Carolina law, the state only regulates dams that are at least 25 feet tall or hold back at least 50 acre-feet, or 16.3 million gallons, of water. Those that don’t meet those requirements are not regulated, unless the state believes smaller dams and lakes threaten public safety, Read said.

When dams are regulated, the state is supposed to periodically inspect the dams and recommend improvements if it finds problems.

Without regulation, the maintenance and stability of a dam is up to the people who own them.

Sometimes, that falls on property owners associations that don’t always have the time or the money to properly manage dams, experts say.

That’s the case on parts of Gills Creek, where most dams are privately owned and maintained by people who live

along a string of lakes.

Gills Creek Watershed director Erich Miarka said the state should consider bringing unregulated dams in urban areas under government oversight because of the potential risk to people and property.

Those smaller dams can still have painful impacts on adjacent property if they fail, Miarka and Tschantz agreed.

“Every dam should be regulated if you are in what is considered an urban setting, or if you are maybe less than a mile upstream from an urban setting, something like that,” Miarka said. “There should at least be a record of the dam somewhere.”

Bradley said he remembers an unregulated dam in the Orangeburg area that flooded a nearby highway. The dam had an emergency spillway, used to carry away excess water after heavy rains, into the highway.

After a heavy rain, the excess water caused traveling cars to hydroplane, he said. Bradley said the dam design would not have been allowed if it had been regulated.

“That owner should have been responsible for redirecting the flow of water,” Bradley said.

Pine Tree blowout

Among the unregulated dams that failed during the Oct. 4. storm was the Pine Tree Dam, a tree-covered earthen structure in northeast Richland County off Trenholm Road Extension.

Several property owners who live on Pine Tree Lake said they tried to take care of the dam through the years, but it was not easy.

Some of the work included managing water levels in the lake, which involves manually pulling open flood gates to release water. That’s important to keep water from overtopping and eroding the dam during storms.

Paul Lawrence, a Yorkhouse Road resident, said lakeside landowners were unwilling to put up money for management of the dam and lake. Lawrence said he is the former president of a lakeside property owners group that recently disbanded.

“Everybody wants to live on the lake, but no one wanted to take responsibility for it,” Lawrence said.

It was unclear if anyone tried to lower water levels in the 13-acre lake before the Oct. 4 storm to reduce pressure on the dam.

It also is not known when the dam actually broke. Early reports indicated the dam broke the morning of Oct. 4, but some property owners around the lake are now saying the dam broke later in the afternoon.

Either way, the failure of the dam sent water pouring out of Pine Tree Lake and down Jackson Creek above Decker Boulevard. One resident who lives just below the dam had extensive damage to her home, although it isn’t known if the failed dam or water overtopping the structure did the most damage.

Decker, a major connection between Two Notch Road and Interstate 77, suffered some of the most significant flooding in the storm.

On Decker, people were trapped in cars as flood waters rose the morning of Oct. 4. Fire and rescue officials saved some of those motorists. Decker Boulevard was closed for two weeks while undergoing repairs. It finally reopened last week. At this point, it remains unclear what impact the Pine Tree dam break had on the breach at the Cary Lake dam.

Property records show that Pine Tree Lake is owned by the Pine Tree Lake Co. LLC. Richland County property records show the land along the lake not owned by individual homeowners is owned by the Pine Tree Hunt Club. That club is a non-profit social organization, according to a federal tax form.

William Haseldon, the treasurer for the Pine Tree Hunt Club, maintained that the lake was kept in good order through the years “by certain residents and the owners.” Asked by The State about future plans for the blown out dam, Haseldon said in an email that he has “no clear picture as to what we can or cannot do from a regulatory perspective.”

He also said the dam broke the afternoon of Oct. 4 after receiving a “large flow of water from the area and upstream Windsor Lake.”

Other unregulated dams

The dam at Pine Tree lake isn’t the only unregulated dam in South Carolina that might have failed during the Oct. 4 storm.

Aerial imagery, compiled by Dayton, Ohio-headquartered Woolpert Inc. and used by state officials to assess damage, show that at least three other lakes in the Columbia-area lost water after the storm hit, according to a review by The State newspaper. These lakes were not identified by DHEC in the list of 16 broken dams in Richland County.

Empty lakes showing up on the Woolpert aerial photographs, taken two days after the storm, include: an unnamed pond between Clemson Road and Spears Creek Church road in northeast Richland County; a pond commonly called Arcadia Lake, behind North Trenholm Baptist Church in the town of Arcadia Lakes; and a pond near Meadow Glen Middle School in Lexington County.

Sid Havird, whose family owns Arcadia Lake, acknowledged damage to an emergency overflow area at the unregulated dam from the storm, but says he drained the lake after the spillway blew out so he could make repairs. A

hole could be seen in the dam structure from a road beside the drained lake, but Havird said the dam remains intact.

Tschantz said he doesn't know the particular circumstances in Columbia, but some unregulated dams across the country fall into disrepair because of neglect.

"Homeowners a lot of times are only interested in their own property," he said. "Then they finally discover 'Hey, we are responsible for the darned dam. We are faced with a \$300,000 bill to (improve it).'"

"I can tell you they are going to find a political solution to deal with the problem first."

SC unregulated dams

South Carolina has 10,000 to 20,000 dams that are not regulated or inspected by the state government, officials say. South Carolina regulates 2,400 dams. Here's a list of regulated dams, ranked by the top counties.

1. Greenville – 151
2. Spartanburg – 147
3. Orangeburg – 142
4. Aiken – 141
5. Lexington – 114
6. Richland – 112
6. Calhoun – 112
8. Edgefield – 105
9. Chesterfield – 95
10. Laurens – 92

SOURCE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Inventory of Dams

Georgetown switches Operating Conditions to normal, disaster recovery centers opening

By Elizabeth Townsend

[Myrtle Beach Sun News](#), Oct. 24, 2015

Highlights

Georgetown officials moved to OPCON 5 on Thursday, meaning they're at normal status now

FEMA is opening two disaster recovery centers this weekend

Mobile disaster recovery center to close once other center opens

Georgetown County officials moved Operating Conditions to normal as flood cleanup continues, and two new Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster recovery centers are set to open up this weekend.

"We're knee-deep in the recovery process, and FEMA should have things up and running soon as we get back to the new normal," Sam Hodge, Georgetown Emergency Management director said.

County officials shifted Operating Conditions to level 5 at 5 p.m. Thursday, meaning they are at normal operating status as flood recovery is now fully the focus instead of response and cleanup is well underway.

Two new FEMA disaster recovery centers are opening up over the weekend, spurring improvement by helping flood survivors get assistance, officials said.

One center is getting things going on Saturday at Potato Bed Ferry Community Center at 531 Big Dam Swamp Dr. in Andrews, but will officially open on Sunday. Another is opening up Sunday at Beck Recreation Center at 2030 Church St. in Georgetown.

Once operating, the disaster recovery centers will be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. until further notice, officials said.

Additionally, a mobile disaster recovery center that opened more than a week ago at 1295 N. Fraser Street in Georgetown, in front of the Tractor Supply Co., will keep operating until Sunday and will close after operations at the Beck Recreation Center are up and running.

"We're trying to get everyone the resources and support they need as they start the rebuilding process," Hodge said.

These FEMA-run centers offer a place where flood survivors can meet with representatives from the S.C. Emergency Management Division, FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and other agencies about disaster assistance programs and how to apply for aid.

Flood-affected residents are asked to register with FEMA before visiting a center, and registration can be done online or by phone.

Federal assistance may include money for temporary rental support and essential home repairs for primary residences not covered by insurance. Low-interest disaster loans from the Small Business Administration may also be available to those who qualify.

Georgetown County officials will also have a presence at these centers aiding flood survivors.

In addition to FEMA, many volunteers from various organizations are on the ground in Georgetown helping the flood-affected.

“We have a lot of faith-based organizations and nonprofits out there helping to provide the services and support people need,” Hodge said.

To register with FEMA online visit <http://www.disasterassistance.gov> or call (800) 621-3362. Help is available in most languages and phone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. Disaster survivors who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY should call (800) 462-7585.

Williamsburg County requires FEMA ID number to receive services, goods

By Dianne Owens

[Florence Morning News](#), Oct 24, 2015

KINGSTREE, S.C. – For the past couple of weeks we’ve been dealing with the most devastating weather event we’ve experienced in our lifetimes, Williamsburg County Superintendent Stanley Pasley said at the opening of the Oct. 20 council meeting.

He thanked the emergency management and public safety employees of the county for their work and thanked elected officials for their support of the county.

Williamsburg County has moved from the response to the recovery mode, Pasley said, but it is still operating in a state of emergency.

A disaster recovery center is open from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. in the Williamsburg County Recreation at 2084 Thurgood Marshall Highway. There, citizens are able to register with FEMA and other helping agencies so they can receive services.

Without the FEMA identification number, Pasley and Williamsburg County Emergency Management Director Tiffany Cooks said, individuals will not be eligible to receive donated goods and services.

“We want to make sure the most needy get what they need,” Cooks said, adding that freeloaders are seeking services they are not entitled to.

Recovery for some people, Cooks said, will take two-three-five years.

“We don’t want people to give up on Williamsburg County,” she said. “We will make sure the folks who need help will get it.”

National Guard Col. James Barkley spoke to council, saying members of the North and South Carolina National Guard units are still in the county assisting public works, SCDOT, and emergency management as they are needed.

In other business, council members unanimously passed second reading of an ordinance that would provide for the issuance and sale of a general obligation bond, not to exceed \$1.5 million.

The proceeds of the note will be used to provide flooding disaster relief to the county’s infrastructure and pay the costs of the issuance of the note, and other lawful purposes as the council shall determine.

Dianne Owens is editor of the Weekly Observer newspaper that serves Hemingway, Johnsonville and their surrounding communities in South Carolina.

FEMA to offer home improvement tips at Summerville Home Depot

By Christina Elmore

[Charleston Post and Courier](#), Oct 23 2015

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials will be available through Tuesday in Berkeley County to offer tips on making homes stronger in the wake of historic flooding that inundated much of the state.

FEMA mitigation specialists will appear during set hours at a Summerville Home Depot store, 190 Marymeade Drive, according to a news release.

Information provided by the specialists will be geared toward do-it-yourself projects and general contractors, the release stated. Assistance teams will also be on hand to answer general questions and guidance on federal aid available to survivors, the release said.

Hours are 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday; 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Sunday; 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday; and 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, the release said.

FEMA also reported a Nov. 4 deadline for people in Charleston and Dorchester counties to apply for disaster unemployment assistance. Berkeley County residents must apply for the aid by Nov. 5, according to a release.

To apply, go to mybenefits.dew.sc.gov or call 866-831-1724.

For more information on strengthening property, go to fema.gov/what-mitigation.

For more information on South Carolina’s recovery, go to fema.gov/disaster/4241.

Residents affected by flood available for food assistance

By Robert Joseph Baker

[Manning Times](#), October 24, 2015

South Carolina residents who lost property or income due to this month's historic flooding are eligible for temporary food assistance.

The state Department of Social Services announced Friday that people living in 20 counties affected by the disaster can apply for debit-like cards that can be used to buy food at grocery stores and other retailers.

People can apply beginning Tuesday through Dec. 3.

Applicants must show they suffered unreimbursed losses in the disaster, such as damage or destruction to their home or lost wages.

People in certain ZIP codes within the counties who already receive help through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will automatically get money added to their cards. Others will have to request a supplement.

Litter Free Week effort aims for cleaner county

[Times and Democrat](#), Orangeburg, Oct. 24, 2015

Orangeburg County residents are being asked to participate in a cleanup blitz as part of Litter Free Week, which begins today.

The Orangeburg County Litter Initiative Group is asking that everyone participate in the cleanup by picking up at least one bag of trash at any location in the county between now and Oct. 30.

Participants are also asked to encourage others by taking before and after photos of cleanup locations. Submit the photos with the location of your pickup and who participated by emailing them to glewis@orangeburgcounty.org or news@timesanddemocrat.com.

Photographs will be posted on The T&D's Facebook page.

Bags of trash can be discarded at the nearest convenience site, or contact Orangeburg County Litter Control at 803-533-6162 to remove the bags.

Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, commended Orangeburg County for taking action to address the litter problem.

"Unfortunately, the magnitude of litter statewide requires a consistent, systemic year-round approach for all 46 counties as detailed in the Take Palmetto Pride Where You Live Act that took effect this year," Cobb-Hunter said.

The taskforce created by the legislation is led by the Department of Natural Resources. Members have been meeting to develop strategies and systems that will be put in place statewide to ensure that litter removal is institutionalized and becomes a routine part of local service delivery.

"In recent flooding, a part of the problem with adequate drainage is that a lot of the ditches were filled with debris, trash, tires and appliances. Naturally, when you've got a drainage ditch that is being used as a garbage dump, there is nowhere for the water to go," she said.

Cobb-Hunter says litter costs everyone – and not just aesthetically.

"If there is any doubt about the importance of removing litter, the flooding that was exacerbated by these clogged ditches should be clear to everyone," Cobb-Hunter said.

Statewide Litter Coordinator Valarie Shannon said the mindsets of people who think it's acceptable to litter have to be changed.

"It's unsightly. No one wants to live in an area where people just discard their trash," Shannon said.

Shannon encourages everyone to leave their environment cleaner than they found it.

"I'm passionate because I think we would all be happier," she said.

Louise Hughes of Keep Orangeburg Beautiful said people must speak out, educate youth and join efforts to clean up.

She is thankful for the support of County Council and the Times and Democrat, as well as various companies and city and county departments for raising awareness about the countywide cleanup.

Hughes says she's seen frozen meat on the side of the road.

"This is a hazard to our groundwater, animals and air," she said.

Orangeburg County Councilwoman Janie Cooper-Smith despises litter because it affects the environment, health, water quality, wildlife, industry and economy.

"When you come into a county, it should be inviting. Litter is a way to keep people and industry out," she said.

Cooper-Smith says she's seen sofas, mattresses and even appliances on the side of roads.

"A lot of people think litter is just cans or cigarette butts, but it is any trash that is thrown on the side of the road," she explained.

Cooper-Smith applauds the Nix-Stilton Group for being honored as the Adopt-a-Highway Group of the Year.

"This is our county. People are responsible for littering and people are responsible for picking it up. Although it

may not be your litter, it's your county. This is home. We want our home looking good," she said.

Keep Orangeburg Beautiful Director Glenda Lewis wants the countywide cleanup to become an annual event.

"We have started on this journey to a cleaner Orangeburg County," Lewis said.

For litter pickup supplies such as gloves, bags and other items, contact Lewis or Hughes at 803-534-2409, ext. 101.

For local farmers still reeling from drought, flood struck at worst time

By Charles D. Perry

[Myrtle Beach Sun News/Myrtle Beach Online](#), Oct. 24, 2015

Highlights

Flood followed devastating summer drought

Officials still calculating damage to crops

Flood also impacting selection at farmers markets

The farmer's leathery, dirt-stained hand cradled a few fruits of the hellish growing season.

"There's supposed to be a perfect little pretty bean in there," said Drew Martin, looking at the shriveled hull and soybeans in his palm. "But they just rotted."

Walking through his withering field in Galivants Ferry, Martin pointed out that losing 120 acres of soybeans during the recent flood wasn't his only problem farming this year.

Wet weather in the spring hampered planting. Then a summer drought left the fields unquenched. A heat wave scorched the crops. When the rain finally arrived, the October deluge drowned the few soybeans those fields produced.

"It's just been bad ever since the day I planted to be honest with you," the 34-year-old said.

Martin comes from a long line of farmers and he's been toiling in the fields since he graduated from high school in 1999. He can't recall a season like this one.

"Probably the hardest year," he said. "It's always been dry or it's always been wet, but never both in the same series of crops, you know? ... Usually, you have one crop that does well."

As local, state and federal officials continue calculating the cost of October's flood, the losses from crop damage are also adding up.

Earlier this month, the South Carolina agriculture commissioner conservatively estimated that crop destruction from the flood may top \$300 million.

One thing that a lot of people don't realize is we were in a disaster area before the disaster. Three months of minimal rainfall and 15 straight days of 100-degree heat in June, that was rough on the crops.

William Hardee, Clemson Extension Service's agronomy agent for Horry and Marion counties

Locally, Clemson Extension Service agents have been meeting with farmers, asking them to fill out damage reports. Those numbers won't include the losses from the extreme drought, which claimed nearly half of the area's corn crop.

"One thing that a lot of people don't realize is we were in a disaster area before the disaster," said William Hardee, Clemson Extension Service's agronomy agent for Horry and Marion counties. "Three months of minimal rainfall and 15 straight days of 100-degree heat in June, that was rough on the crops."

Along with those challenges, Horry farmers knew early in the year that falling commodity prices would make turning a profit difficult.

"We knew we would have to make very good yields just to break even," Hardee said. "We were already in a hole before the storm came. But when the storm did come, it kind of wiped out any chance we had of making anything."

Locally, the hardest hit crops have been peanuts, cotton and soybeans.

The weather also affected hay that had been put up for livestock. Two weeks of high humidity and extreme moisture led to mold and mildew building up in the hay. Most of the damaged hay is unsuitable for horses, Hardee said, and he suspects the quality will also be too poor for cows.

"It has ruined a lot of hay that was in storage," he said of the flood.

Clemson Extension officials said they hadn't received a county-by-county breakdown of farm damage estimates. Some losses, they said, cannot be calculated until the crops are out of the field.

What is certain is that the most recent federal farm bill includes no money for disaster relief.

"The policy that the feds undertook in 2014 basically was 'You're going to have to insure your own crops. You can't count on the federal government to bail you out,'" said state Sen. Greg Hembree, R-North Myrtle Beach, who sits on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee in the S.C. General Assembly. "What we're trying to do is use sort of the Sandy Model. After Hurricane Sandy, the feds stepped in and made special allocations for certain affected areas."

Hembree added that those efforts must be undertaken by the state's representatives in Washington D.C., though

he's not ruling out farmer assistance from South Carolina's General Assembly.

"If we could put together something that's reasonable, I think we will have a group that's sympathetic and will listen to us," he said of his colleagues in Columbia. "This thing is still so fresh, we're still sort of in the assessment stage. ... We're still kind of catching our breath."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture does offer a low-interest emergency loan program and some farmers have a portion of their crops insured, but local officials say those programs won't come close to solving the problem. There are other challenges, too.

"When you talk about flood damage, the crop damage is just a small part of the equation," said Blake Lanford, a regional administrator with Clemson Extension. "What about farm ponds where the dams got breached? Or what about roads, farm roads?"

Insurance for farmers can also be complicated. Lanford said there are programs available for row crops such as soybeans, corn and tobacco, but specialty crops (i.e. fruits and vegetables) aren't insured the same way.

"You don't insure that stuff," he said.

Although local farmers primarily deal with row crops, Lanford said the flood put vegetable growers in a bind, particularly those whose plants sat in floodwaters.

"There's just really nothing you can do with it," he said of waterlogged vegetables.

The flood's impact can be seen in the selection at Grand Strand farmers markets, said Samantha Tipton, executive director of the Waccamaw Market Cooperative, which runs seven markets in Horry and Georgetown counties.

"We had three vendors at our market this morning," she said Thursday. "So it's really sad to see."

The market season was already winding down, but the flood wiped out some vendors' vegetables. Another farmer who sells goat cheese had a problem with dairy goats that stopped eating during the rainy weather. The farmer couldn't milk the goats during that time, thus reducing her supply.

"You get a lot of these indirect hits that you don't initially think about," Tipton said. "But everybody's been affected in some way."

The farmer just keeps going. And keeps trying again.

Drew Martin, Galivants Ferry farmer

In Georgetown County, this month's downpour drenched Millgrove Farms.

Carol Williams' family specializes in organic crops, including Asian greens, kale, collards, cabbage and broccoli. When the rains came this month, she had five acres of vegetables in the earth.

"The 24 inches of rain just drowned them all," she said. "We're surrounded by water, with creeks and the river. The fields did not flood with that kind of water. It was the rain that could not drain off of that field. So we have no crops left."

Had the flood come in August, the family could have replanted. At this point, there's just not enough time.

Yet despite her losses, Williams said the flood could have been worse. The family's coastal Bermuda hay was planted on high, sandy ground that drains well. They were baling it last week.

"It's OK," she said. "God is good. There's people without homes. We feel blessed. Our home was high and dry. ... We're just going to keep on keeping on and come springtime we'll plant those seeds."

At Martin's farm in Galivants Ferry, he remains equally resolute. He also acknowledges that others have been hit harder by the drought and the flood than he has.

Martin knows farmers south of him who received more rain. And he didn't plant any corn this year, so he won't suffer those losses the way many of his peers did. He also has insurance, though not for the amount he's invested.

Martin hopes state or federal officials can develop some type of aid program.

"I feel like they'll do the right thing," he said. "I'm praying and hoping."

Regardless of what the government does, he plans to stick with farming, turning over dirt on 1,200 acres in Horry and Marion counties.

"The farmer just keeps going," he said. "And keeps trying again."

Need help?

Clemson Extension Service is asking farmers affected by the recent flood to fill out damage assessment forms. To receive a copy of the form or for more details, contact the Horry County office at (843) 365-6715.

Weekly Observations: Asking for help and saying thanks

By Dianne Owens

[Florence Morning News](#), Oct. 23, 2015

Many of us have had lessons during the past few weeks about being in need, and about helping others when they are in need. Cream, as they say, rises to the top, and that's been case with most people in the area coming to the rescue of those needing help.

Facebook, that great modern bulletin board that is at its best when it is matching needs with those who have resources, worked well during the drama that unfolded in the days earlier this month when rain and flood wreaked its havoc. People called for help. Boats, clothes, food and water showed up.

Over near Johnsonville, Crossover Church members donated time and resources to come out in the rain. They fried fish, feeding some of those affected by the flood over in the Neck Community.

Donations poured into First Baptist Church of Johnsonville, where the American Red Cross and others set up an emergency shelter and resource center. The folks in Pamplico who gathered goods and delivered them throughout the region get a big thank you.

Over near Andrews, in Williamsburg County's Bloomingvale Community, plans are being made in the community center for a Friday, Oct. 30., Trunk or Treat for children. That will help in taking everyone's minds off the losses many in the community experienced when their homes were overrun with, in some cases, six feet of water.

Volunteers are welcome, just come to the Bloomingvale Community park and let the kids enjoy themselves, the note on the Bloomingvale Facebook page says.

In recent days, the Center has seen American Red Cross, DHEC and FEMA representatives meet with citizens in helping them get started rebuilding their lives. A little fun is a great way to show life goes on in the midst of tragedy.

We saw life going on in spite of great loss over in Kingtree this past weekend. The sun came out and the weather cooperated.

The annual Pig Pickin' Festival activities brought more laughter and fun into a community hit hard for water damage. Fire pits were lit, the hogs were cooked and the barbecue was enjoyed by hundreds. Along with the festivities, FEMA representatives were on hand to help anyone needing to file a claim regarding damage.

The rebuilding begins. Instead of clothes, food and water, now construction materials and crews are needed throughout the area to restore homes and the "daily-ness" of life.

Dianne Owens is editor of the Weekly Observer newspaper that serves Hemingway, Johnsonville and their surrounding communities in South Carolina.

Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation donates to support SC National Guard

[WIS TV 10 NBC Columbia](#), Oct 23, 2015

The Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation has donated \$20,000 to support SC National Guard families impacted by flooding.

Frank Siller, Chairman and CEO of the Tunnel To Towers organization, said "The South Carolina National Guard, along with Fort Jackson, have played a key role in the tremendous success of the Tunnel To Towers 5K Run/Walk in Columbia since it first began three years ago."

"In recognition of that," Siller went on, "and the fact that the mission of Tunnel To Towers is to support first responders and our military service members, we cannot think of a more fitting way to meet that mission than to provide real, tangible assistance to them at this time."

The Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation is providing \$20,000 worth of Home Depot gift cards to South Carolina National Guard families throughout the state who were impacted directly by the historic flood.

The Midlands, and the City of Columbia, have had a close connection to the organization: Catherine Christman, cousin of the late New York Firefighter Steven Siller, tells WIS 10 that she made the City of Columbia her home for the last fifteen years, having recently relocated just days ahead before the flood.

The annual Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers 5K Columbia Run/Walk is held every September, in memory of Siller, who lost his life on 9/11. When the call went out for firefighters to respond to the World Trade Center towers, Siller ran to help, carrying over 60 pounds of firefighting gear, through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel that passes underneath the East River that connects Brooklyn to Manhattan. Siller was one of 343 firefighters that lost their life on that day.

The run is held in a number of cities around the country each year in honor and recognition of the sacrifice of first responders and the military.

Friends, community aid police officers hit by floods

By Glen Luke Flanagan

The homes of 5 Columbia police officers suffered significant flood damage

Community closes ranks to help their own

Churches, other police departments also rush to help

[The State](#) (Columbia), Oct. 23, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC--When Sgt. Chris Williams woke one night to find his power gone, he didn't know it was the beginning of the worst flood in Columbia's recent memory.

“I went downstairs to see if it was just my house or all the neighborhood,” he said. “When I went outside, some of the cats we were feeding, they ran off the deck, and it sounded like they were jumping in a swimming pool.”

Williams just had time to gather his wife, 3-year-old daughter and three dogs before he had to flee his home in the Coldstream subdivision in Lexington County. Water was coming up to the bumper of his pickup truck by the time he got out, he said. His 11-year-old twins were staying with their grandmother at the time.

Four other officers who are Williams’ compatriots in the Columbia Police Department suffered similar fates during the flood. Nicholas Scott, Steve White, Robert Calby and Chad Walker’s homes all sustained major damage, according to a release from the Police Benevolent Foundation.

It was a week and a half before Williams and his wife, who is pregnant with their fourth child, could move back into their home. When they did so, they had to confine themselves to the second floor because of the extensive damage on the first floor. In the middle of it all, the family celebrated daughter Claire’s third birthday.

“We turned a stack of plywood into a dinner table and had a birthday party for the family around it,” Williams said. “We’ve lost our house, but we haven’t lost our home. We’re still making a home – it’s just taking a bit of adjusting.”

Friends and neighbors helped make that happen, the sergeant added. A major with the University of South Carolina police department brought a cheesecake for the party, and community members have continued to bring food. Members of the New Spring Church have thrown their efforts into not only helping Williams and his family, but the whole neighborhood, and have spent the time since the flood gutting damaged houses and providing meals to those in need.

Aid for the Williams family, as well as the other officers displaced, has come in monetary form as well. USC Maj. Jim Miles kicked things off with a GoFundMe.com page for Williams. And the Police Benevolent Foundation and the S.C. Division of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association followed suit, raising money for each of the five officers.

It took a bit of digging to find out the officers needed help, said Columbia officer Joe Czeladko.

“It’s not so much that they didn’t want to talk about it,” said Czeladko, president of the Columbia chapter of the Police Benevolent Association. “It’s just us being police officers – we spend the majority of our time taking care of the citizens of Columbia, taking care of the citizens of Columbia. We generally don’t want to put ourselves first. Our guys aren’t selfish.”

The association’s job is to put the officers first while they’re busy putting the citizens first, Czeladko said.

Rebuilding from the flood will be a long process, Williams said. His family can’t rebuild their home until Lexington County gives them the go-ahead, something the sergeant said could take four to five weeks.

In the meantime, his family will move into an apartment come November. Through it all, he said, the community support has been invaluable.

“It’s real humbling,” Williams said. “I can’t express the emotions we feel when God works through the people around us.”

HOW TO HELP

Anyone interested in donating to the Columbia Police Officers Flood Recovery Fund can do so through www.pbfi.org or by cellphone.

Texting “COPS FLOOD” to 85944 will make a \$10 donation to the “Columbia Police Officers Flood Recovery Fund” through the donor’s cellphone bill.

Famously Hot New Year to bring economic boost

By Kelly Petty

[Columbia Daily](#), October 23, 2015

Famously Hot New Year is not only known for bringing in top musical acts, but is also an economic boost at the end of the year for Columbia’s hotel, restaurant and tourism industry.

Since its founding four years ago, Famously Hot New Year has grown from 20,000 attendees to 28,000 last year from more than 28 states and six countries. The event generated an estimated \$1 million in hotel and restaurant revenues in 2014.

“When you think about just six or seven years ago when people would go to Charlotte or Atlanta or Charleston or anywhere else on New Year’s Eve and hotel rooms laid bare—now getting into hotel rooms are tough making reservations for our restaurants are tough,” Mayor Steve Benjamin said.

“The hoteliers and retailers have been incredibly excited to watch it grow every single year,” he added.

The economic stimulus also extends to the transportation business. Data from the 2014 Famously Hot New Year showed that Budweiser’s Alert Cab service, a partnership with cab companies to offer free and discounted cab fare, gave over 200 rides. The COMET bus offered special service to take attendees downtown and generated nearly 700

rides, six times as many who ride on a typical weekend night.

To further benefit the local business community this year, the Famously Hot New Year VIP event has been canceled to encourage guests to patronize businesses around the city.

Organizers of this year's celebration will also support fundraising efforts for flood relief. Famously Hot New Year has partnered with the Central Carolina Community Foundation to promote the group's S.C. Flood Relief Fund.

Famously Hot New Year will bring back the food court featuring local vendors and the WOW New Year's Eve Carnival with games and rides for kids. Main Street ICE, the annual skating rink held at Boyd Plaza in front of the Columbia Museum of Art, will also return.

"We've got probably triple amount of students who live in downtown Columbia than two years ago. We're blessed to have over 50 thousand students who call Columbia home at any point in the year," outgoing Co-Chair Sam Johnson said. "We have to make sure this celebration continues to be diverse."

Famously Hot New Year also comes at a time not long after the city and the state garnered worldwide attention for the Charleston shootings and subsequent removal of the Confederate flag from State House grounds, as well as the recent floods.

The city's leaders hope people will come out unified to kick off a brighter 2016.

"We're good people, we're faithful people, we're strong people and you saw the best of South Carolina come out. I think that will be the enduring memory of 2015 for most folks," Benjamin said. "Let's take it out with some fun, some faith and some fellowship, and with our family and friends. Let's start 2016 and pray for a great year."

New Hampshire hosts summit on coastal flooding

Associated Press, Oct. 24, 2015

http://thetandd.com/news/state-and-regional/new-hampshire-hosts-summit-on-coastal-flooding/article_14801f24-86a0-5619-bb2d-8a800006893a.html

HAMPTON, N.H. (AP) — Mayors and other elected officials from 18 states are gathering in New Hampshire for a bipartisan summit on coastal flooding.

The Rising Tides summit in Hampton on Saturday will bring together officials representing a total of 95,000 miles of coastline, including some who are just starting to evaluate the risks flooding poses to infrastructure, homes and the economy and others who have done years of analysis. The group is calling for increased state and federal support for such planning, and urging presidential candidates to address the issue.

Portsmouth Mayor Robert Lister, a Democrat, and Republican state Sen. Nancy Stiles of Hampton say coastal flooding is too important of an issue to be ignored by our most important leaders.

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