

## June 10, 2008 Media Availability

**[0:00] GOV:** I just spent the last maybe 7 hours with General L and DNR Director Carter and we've been to Worthington, two or three sites in the Edwardsport-Freedomville area, we've been to Vincennes and Hazleton, we flew over Elnora this morning and again on the way back. Once again, my observations are that work is proceeding effectively and cooperatively. We did not identify, with the exception of the continuing need for water in parts of Knox County, we did not identify any shortages or gaps—taking preventative or protective action downstream places now. I visited with my old friend from past events, Chief Mike Ellis from Hazleton. We walked the levee down there and it's in very good shape right now. But the Guard is doing such excellent work building sand bags ahead where we've encouraged places like that to err on the side of caution, maybe doing a little extra sand bagging. Elnora, I'm advised, that the last 40-odd people are being encouraged to evacuate in the interest of complete safety, and that DNR has the lead in helping most of those people move out. The situation there, again from the air, no breeches and some space between the water and the top of the levee, but folks on the ground say there is some seepage between the sand bags and the water pressure is still increasing as opposed to decreasing, so we have a very touch-and-go situation there where everything that can be done has been done.

**[2:05] GOV:** A lot of agricultural damage, a lot of that. And that's a shame, because Indiana farmers who aren't hit in this way are in route to probably one of their best years in history, and that's a really good thing for our state and our small towns. But for the places that have really been inundated here, there is going to be some folks whom we believe will not get replanted, and others who will not enjoy the sorts of yields and income they otherwise would have. Those are the highlights you would not have seen from our written reports.

**[2:50] Question:** One of the things we are hearing from the National Weather Service is that the levee had breached in Plainville, although no towns were threatened. Any news about that?

**[3:04] GOV:** That's the same understanding that we have. It's an agricultural area. We went right over it coming and going and I guess you'd have to have a better eye than the General and I had, but the area in general is inundated. Part of that, I suppose, could be from this breach. But that simply aggravates a problem we had already which is lots and lots of great agricultural land underwater.

**[3:36] Question:** Today Ball State released a study that estimated \$126 million in damages. I was wondering if you think that is an accurate estimate.

**[3:49] GOV:** Sorry I don't know. I know they have a model up there that apparently has been refined over time and that's a good operation, so that's probably as good a number as we've got right now. But I can't vouch.

**[4:02] Question:** I heard that the next areas to be concerned about would be areas along the White River and in the Bloomington/New Harmony area.

**[4:14] GOV:** Sure. That's where the water goes. Folks, we didn't go to Petersburg today but people we talked to at Hazleton had just been there and they said they thought it looked pretty good. Here are two things I can tell you—in contrast to '05 and some other events, we have one thing working for us—the Ohio River is not at flood levels. And therefore, it's easier for Indiana to drain into it. In '05 the Ohio was very very high and water didn't have anywhere to go and so it backed and it made the problems in New Harmony, and Hazleton, and Petersburg and places like that worse than they would have been. So the experts that we're talking to and in this case, it includes people like Chief Ellis down in Hazleton who's been through this a few times, believe that that's helping. The other thing I can tell you about Hazleton is that this is the town the Guard saved literally in '05 and the chief showed me many places where they strengthened nine places where their levee had barely ruptured before. They put in a flood gate and took some other steps which means they're in better shape to handle things than they were back then, so let's just hope that that's the general case.

**[5:42] Question:** Dept. Homeland Security mentioned that 39 counties had been added to the Federal disaster list. Will those be added to the state list as well?

**[5:55] GOV:** I'm sure the answer is yes, but I've been doing sand bagging and roadwork, not paperwork. Joe, do you want to tell them about the paper work?

**Joe:** We're working closely, if you remember, initially we started out with 41 counties affected from the initial storms and we're addressing this as one event. So all of those counties eventually will be working through our process to attempt to get added to the declarations if they qualify. As damage assessment pans out.

**[6:27] GOV:** I think I mentioned yesterday that when I spoke to FEMA director Paulison on Sunday night, as he was moving the presidential declaration through he told me that there were a combination of approvals that would give him the authority to add counties as more data came in. And he told me it would be very straightforward and I think that's been the case so far.

**[6:55] Question:** Will any trailers be provided for victims?

**[7:00] GOV:** Well, if they need shelter we'll find it one way or another. The number of people who have been seeking has been declining as you know. So I don't think we have a widespread problem of that kind, but if we do, we'll meet it.

**[7:13] Question:** The spokesperson for FEMA today was careful to draw a distinction that what the President had granted thus far was public assistance as far as the disaster designation, but individual assistance will follow at some later date if at all. It's a separate decision. Did you get any indication from the director that it would be forthcoming?

**[7:38] GOV:** I wouldn't ask him to make any premature judgment, and by the way Secretary Chertoff, in trying to reach me, we almost connected before I came in here. If there is anything further I will let you know. I'll go out personally on this limb and say it would be astonishing to me if we did not qualify for each form of assistance just given the immensity of the event. I don't know what the number is, whether the Ball State number is accurate or high or low, but it is going to be a very big number and my accumulating experience with this tells me we are probably going to qualify in each respect.

**[8:19] Question:** [Inaudible]

**[8:26] Governor:** It's in a very agricultural area. Plainville is in Daviess County, it is a little bit downstream. The town itself actually sits at some distance—what there is of a town—sits at some distance from the river. But apparently there is a levy along the river, and the Coast Guard believes they spotted from the air a breach. I would just tell you with or without that breach we have a lot of farmland underwater down there. Whatever breach this is probably just aggravated that situation.

**[9:01] Question:** In addition to the Federal disaster declaration that makes Federal aid available, is there any state aid available or will it all be coming from the Federal government for agriculture loans, small business loans, home repairs, that kind of thing?

**[9:18] GOV:** We'll do a ton of highway work. Obviously the state is spending lots of money right now, and we will on remediation of public damage. We started a small fund—as we discussed yesterday—as a last, last, last resort in case Federal and private assistance doesn't meet individual needs, and we could call that into play if needed at the end.

**[9:48] Question:** [Regarding the Porter family Governor Daniels met in Edwardsport]

**[9:59] GOV:** The Porters, yes. We walked around the outskirts of Edwardsport with them—saw them and a lot of their neighbors.

**[10:05] Question:** After talking to you, she [Mrs. Porter] said “we now have hope.” I was wondering what you said to her that gave her that hope.

**[10:14] GOV:** I have no idea. But I said to her what I say to each such person: first I want to ascertain if they are alright; and I want to know if there is anything we can do to make sure they are safe or well-fed. Obviously I empathize as anybody would with their situation, and if they have any questions that I feel competent to answer I do. What I tell them all is that we are going to get them all the help we can as fast as we can. I guess we had that kind of conversation.

**[10:56] Question:** You visited the power plant in Edwardsburg. What was the reason for that?

**[11:00] GOV:** Well they have water in the basement. They have shut it down and they may well need to shut it down for an extended period. They were pumping out the facility as we were there and sand bagging as water continued to encroach.

**[11: 22] Question:** What does shutting it down mean for the people who live down there? Are they without power now in their homes?

**[11: 28] GOV:** No, I talked to Larry the plant manager. Someone will have to help me with his last name. At some length no, Duke Energy has got several other sources of power, but when we were there they were still hoping that it would be a very temporary outage. But, several hours later, by the time I got back, sounds like it may be a little longer. He said if they had significant water in the basement portion of the facility, they’d probably have to take it out of service for awhile. But no, I asked him that very question, and they said everybody will have power unless there’s been some kind of transmission problem, and so far we don’t have those.

**[12: 12] Question:** So that plant is open, or not?

**[12: 14] GOV:** No, it’s not producing electricity right now, and it may be out of service for awhile.

**[12: 20] Question:** [Inaudible]

**[12:22] GOV:** Absolutely.

**[12:24] Question:** What about, we mentioned the water situation in Knox County? Is this something that you, they... I’m getting calls from the public wanting to send cases of water down. Is this the kind of aid they need, or is this much more massive where you do need these water buffalos?

**[12:43] GOV:** Well, everywhere we went we asked water, particularly in Knox. We were at North Knox High School, where the command post is. They felt they had ample supplies right now, but we’ll take no chances, and we don’t know how long this will go. But the issue in much

of that part of the area is that they think wells may have been contaminated by flood water, and flood water could have a bacteria in it or that sort of thing. So in the interest of safety, they've urged people not to drink un-boiled water from their wells, and that's why we're taking it in other forms.

**[13: 21] Question:** One of the hydrologists that I talked to, the one I mentioned also said that last night's rains and yesterday's rains, he said that he didn't really expect it to exacerbate things that much more.

**[13:32] GOV:** That'd be...I didn't hear anybody say to the contrary. Is that consistent with our general impression, Joe?

**[13:41] Homeland Security:** I think the only thing we were watching was the east fork in the White River that seemed to... the crest levels seemed to be a little higher than what the earlier projections were.

**[13:51]Question:** And what general areas are those?

**[13:53] Homeland Security:** Around Martin County was one of the places we are watching.

**[13:57] GOV:** You know, it's not going to be the same everywhere. In Hazleton right now they've been told to expect maybe 28 feet, 29 feet. They had 31 in 2005. On the other hand, in Worthington I talked with an older gentleman—he's lived there a half a century—and new people who went back further. And Worthington, they're saying this is bigger than 1913, they're talking 1875 as the last one that went up as high as this.

**[14:34] Question:** Do they know how high it went up in 1975?

**[14: 35] GOV:** Too darn high. I don't know (laugh).

**[14: 39] Question:** [Inaudible] ...impact on agriculture, agricultural land, and businesses and the tax revenues they would have generated in that outlays state resources to deal with flooding. Is there any projection on what the impact is going to be on the state budget?

**[14:54] GOV:** Oh, Brian, I don't know. We're not really worried about that right now. Fortunately, we're in position to manage it. As you know, we have a billion dollar surplus, and we expect to be adding to that this year rather significantly. We've got 20 days to go in the fiscal year, then we'll know for sure. So, it won't be positive, but that's why you're careful about your spending and build a little reserve, and let's just be thankful we're in the shape we're in and not in debt like all our neighbors.

**[15:27] Question:** Is Worthington still surrounded?

**[15:28] GOV:** Yes. 231 and 67 are both closed.

**[15:32] Question:** Can't get in there?

**[15:33] GOV:** It's the aisle of Worthington right now, but some folks there told me they thought that was kind of glamorous.

**[15:42] Question:** This also says you visited a high school in Vincennes. Is that where a shelter was set up or where you planned to go?

**[15:47] GOV:** Uh, let's see. Well in Vincennes actually that's where the guardsmen who are doing the sandbag work are billeting and getting a little...getting their food and getting a little rest. It's down the road from the INDOT garage, which is where we run that situation. It's sort of the assembly line for sandbags, and we just went by there and thanked the men and women who have been working so hard.

**[16:12] Question:** Perhaps you covered this earlier today. We're getting a lot of calls from Columbus, people asking when's FEMA gonna be coming, people looking for individual assistance. Do you have any idea as far as that?

**[16:26] GOV:** Well, soon. As we covered here, you have to tally the damages to qualify. We're moving already on that and whatever the record is for prompt filing in an event this size, we'll try to break it. And I'll just tell you that the folks from FEMA who are represented here, I've been hearing from them and again, I'll be talking to their superior, Secretary Cherdoff here in a few minutes, all over this issue so the answer is as fast as possible.

**[17:04] Question:** Governor, from a homeowners' perspective, what do they have to deal with, channels do they have to do to do to access the aid?

**[17:11] GOV:** Well, there's an individual application, and it can be made online I'm told, and it can be made at a central phone number. It's our intention to establish information centers in each hard-hit area. My objective and the request I've made to all these folks is to try to make certain that this is as user-friendly as it can be because we will have people who need aid or have questions of more than one kind, and we're going to try our best to make it one-stop shopping so they don't have to move from place to place or agency to agency. A lot of hard work's going into that right now, and the FEMA folks have been very cooperative. I have only praise for their efforts so far.

**[18:03] Question:** Yesterday we were told there were 1,046 National Guard. I wonder if you have an idea of the number today?

**[18:10] GOV:** A little over 1100. We were down with General Harris, who is the commander on scene down there, and its between 1100 and 1200 at this moment.

**[18:24] Question:** Does anybody have any idea of the number of sandbags that have been put out?

**[18:29] GOV:** It's probably a six-digit number. Now I don't know how many are in place, but today I've improved my understanding of the mathematics of sandbags a lot, as usual (I am) full of questions about how many we can make and how many it takes to cover a given area. We appear to be well provisioned between inventory that had been built in preparation and the fast work of the Guard, and our inmates and others who participated. If we're going to have a problem, it's not likely to be an inadequate number of sandbags.

**[19:12] Question:** You had inmates from the Department of Correction? Maybe you said this yesterday, I wasn't here but...

**[19:17] GOV:** Yeah I think so. Wasn't that one way in which some of our DOC guests...yeah...quite a large number of them.

**[19:23] Question:** Do they come out and do this, or do they do this in...

**[19:25] GOV:** In their cells? No, we can bring them out (laughter). No, I'm just kidding. No, a little fresh air, a little hard work. You know, very sincerely, I got this question today from a little fresh air, a little hard work. I got this question from somewhere out there today who had noticed, and by the way, it is not unusual, year in-year out we have them helping to keep roadways cleaner, and cut grass, and do things like this. It's part of a program to give them something useful to do, and you hope in a case like this, that some of these folks feel like they did something socially useful, and something that they can take some pride in. They ought to feel pride because they helped some people.

**[20:05] Question:** Inaudible.

**[20:08] Question:** Are there any problems delivering coal to the southern parts of the state?

**[20:15] GOV:** Interesting question. Not that I've heard of, but we'll ask and see if anybody has. Obviously we have a few rail lines which are washed out, but I've not heard that.

**[20:26] Question:** The Weather Service says forecast is dry but rain on Friday. When can you say the immediate danger is over?

**[20:37] GOV:** You're not going to hear that out of us for quite some time. As long as we have high standing water, we've got risks. And again, whether they're public health risks or the risk that someone will take a chance they shouldn't have taken—everybody tells me that three days of dry is going to make a lot of positive difference, but we will still be I'm sure, holding our breath in concern for people come Friday.

**[21:09] Question:** Question regarding National Guard.

**[21:20] GOV:** The answer is that they're not at this time. Elnora is as sand-bagged as anyone thought was going to make sense. And it's either going to hold or it's not, and it was late last night I believe when the decision was made by DHS and all of the other agencies to transfer operations downstream—start working ahead of the problem. All I can tell you is that that has held for now, but when you see you Elnora, you'll see that it's a long, long, long perimeter and there are thousands and thousands of bright white sand bags there for the moment protecting and saving that town.