

STATE OF NEBRASKA
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
March 16, 2019 16:00
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Mike Wight, (402) 471-7428, DHHS

Update on State Response to Historically Catastrophic Weather Events

Lincoln, Neb. – With devastating flooding in several regions of the state, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), partner agencies, emergency officials, and volunteers remain hard at work assisting with historically catastrophic conditions statewide.

Governor Pete Ricketts, U.S. Senator Ben Sasse, and Nebraska state senators visited a shelter in Fremont and a community meeting in Niobrara Saturday to thank volunteers and highlight how Nebraskans can help as the state responds.

NEMA is tracking conditions across the state, responding to requests for assistance from local emergency managers and developing a common operating picture to keep local officials aware of the situation.

The State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) was opened Wednesday and will remain open as long as needed. The SEOC is staffed by officials from NEMA, Nebraska State Patrol, Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Fire Marshal, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Military Department, and other agencies.

As Nebraskans pull together to support one another in this severe weather event, we encourage people to be cautious of fraudulent donation sites that are beginning to appear on social media. Monetary donations can be made to the [Nebraska/SW Iowa Red Cross](#) Disaster Relief Fund. Donations of water can also be made to local media for distribution.

As of 1 pm Saturday, 52 counties and two tribes have issued emergency declarations.

Safety and Security:

Evacuations are taking place throughout the state at this time. Travel is extremely dangerous with conditions changing rapidly. Non-essential travel is not advised.

All evacuation notices, suggested and mandatory, are STRONGLY encouraged. By ignoring evacuation recommendations, extraction requests made later may be delayed.

Troopers with the NSP have been working with local officials and Nebraska Game and Parks officers on water rescues overnight and into the morning. NSP has deployed two light armored vehicles (LAV) to assist with water rescue in north central and northeast Nebraska. The LAVs are able to reach places that a normal rescue vehicle cannot. Troopers are also being repositioned from less affected areas to the more affected areas to assist with flood response. Additional troopers have also been called in from required days off to assist in these emergency situations.

Urban Search and Rescue-Task Force One, the Nebraska National Guard, and the Nebraska State Patrol are working together to provide water and air rescue missions.

Several state parks are closed due to weather conditions. To find out if a park is closed, check <http://outdoornebraska.gov/weatherclosures/>

Due to ongoing missions, this is a very rapidly changing event. Data represents only available estimates from the time of this release.

Evacuations (full and partial) as of Saturday, 3 p.m.:

- Anselmo
- Beemer
- Belgrade
- Broken Bow – Senior Center
- Northern Butler County
- Cedar Creek – along river
- Cedar Rapids
- Dannebrog
- Eastern Washington County
- Eastern Richardson County
- Fremont
- Genoa
- Inglewood – DHHS Call Center
- Linoma Beach
- Lynch
- Pender – Senior Living
- Rulo – near River and LC Estates
- North Bend
- Plattsmouth – Beach Road
- Plattsmouth – Moorehead Island

- Plattsmouth – OMA Fish and Wildlife
- Pleasanton
- Scribner
- Wisner
- Waterloo (voluntary)

Food, Water, Sheltering: Red Cross reports there are 879 people in Red Cross and partner shelters. Shelters are open in the following places:

- Bellevue, Nebraska (Calvary Christian Church, 10100 Cedar Island Road)
- Council Bluffs, Iowa (Salem United Methodist Church, 14955 Somerset Avenue)
- Bellwood, Nebraska (Bellwood Fire Department, 752 41 Road)
- Boelus, Nebraska (CNR Center, 614 Delaware Street)
- Columbus, Nebraska (DHS- East Central Health Department, 4321 41st Avenue)
- Elkhorn, Nebraska (Elkhorn Middle School, 3200 207th Street)
- Fremont, Nebraska (First Lutheran Church, 3200 Military Avenue; enter Mission Center on NW corner of campus)
- Fremont, Nebraska (Trinity Lutheran Church, 1546 N. Luther Rd.)
- Fremont, Nebraska (Elkhorn Middle School, 3200 207th Street)
- Fremont, Nebraska (Salem Lutheran Church, 401 E. Military Avenue)
- Fremont, Nebraska (Fremont Middle School, 540 Johnson Road)
- Fremont, Nebraska (Church of the Nazarene, 960 Johnson Road)
- Hader, Nebraska (Hader Fire Hall, 101 Front Street)
- Missouri Valley, Iowa (Rand Community Center, 100 S. 4th Street)
- Norfolk, Nebraska (Lutheran High Northeast, 2010 N. 37th Street)
- Norfolk, Nebraska (Bel Air Elementary School, 1101 N. 18th Street)
- Norfolk, Nebraska (Sacred Heart Elementary School, 2301 Madison Avenue)
- Pierce, Nebraska (Pierce Fire Department, 106 1st Street)
- Pierce, Nebraska (Pierce High School, 201 N. Sunset Street)
- Plattsmouth, Nebraska (Plattsmouth Community Center, 308 S. 18th Street)
- Randolph, Nebraska (Randolph City Auditorium, 119 N. Main Street)
- St. Edward, Nebraska (St. Edward City Hall, 1302 State Highway 39)
- Valley, Nebraska (Douglas County West High School, 401 S. Pine Street)
- Wood River, Nebraska (Wood River Rural High School, 13800 W. Wood River Rd.)

Mayor Chris Beutler of Lincoln on Friday signed an emergency order enabling the Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department (LTU) to escalate staffing and resources

to further safeguard the City's wellfields near Ashland. Major flooding in the area is causing land erosion that, if left unaddressed, could compromise valuable city infrastructure.

The water supplies for the cities of Lincoln and Omaha are unaffected at this time.

According to the National Weather Service, historic flooding continues today across much of eastern Nebraska, resulting from heavy rain, snowmelt and ice jam break-ups.

- The National Weather Service is forecasting major flooding on the Missouri River near Brownville through noon on Wednesday, March 20
- The National Weather Service is forecasting major flooding on the Elkhorn River at Waterloo through Saturday evening [EDS: TODAY]
- The National Weather Service is forecasting major flooding on Wood River near Alda through Monday, March 18.

Several towns are experiencing disruptions in water service. Updates will be included on the NEMA social media accounts.

For veterans affected by the recent flooding in Nebraska, the Nebraska Veterans Aid (NVA) may be able to assist with food, clothing, and emergency housing (i.e. hotel accommodations). Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine the amount of assistance a veteran and/or their eligible dependents would be able to receive. Additional information on the program is available here: <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/nva> . Veterans should apply for NVA through their [County Veteran Service Officer](#).

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture has put together a list of disaster relief resources for Nebraska farmers and ranchers seeking assistance due to severe weather. This list includes information about NDA's Hay and Forage Hotline and programs from the Farm Service Agency. For information go to: www.nda.nebraska.gov/resources.

Communications: The radio tower at Verdigre remains inaccessible; however, the Nebraska State Patrol and other radio operators are able to use cellphones for communications.

Transportation: Interstate 80 is now open; however, road conditions remain dangerous across the state.

Governor Pete Ricketts has issued an executive order temporarily waiving overweight limits to help speed disaster relief response times. A copy of the executive order can be found by [clicking here](#).

Information on road closures can be found on the Nebraska 511 map at <https://www.511.nebraska.gov>. Nebraska 511 provides the most up-to-date travel conditions. Nebraska 511 can be accessed through the 511 smartphone app or by dialing 511.

The Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) Highway Helpline is available 24 hours a day for motorists in need of assistance. Drivers can reach NSP by dialing *55 from any cell phone or 911 in an emergency.

Governor Pete Ricketts, in consultation with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), issued an emergency declaration effective March 12, 2019, in anticipation of severe weather issues set to impact the state. Details about the declaration can be found here: <https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/gov-ricketts-issues-emergency-declaration-nebraska-prepares-potential-historic-flooding>

###