



STATE OF OHIO

Emergency Operations Center

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Joint Information Center **NEWS RELEASE** *2005 Severe Winter Weather Update #9*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information:

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RAIN STOPS, OHIOANS SHIFT FOCUS TO CLEANUP ACTIVITIES

Damage assessments begin next week across the state

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The rain, ice and snow across Ohio has finally ended, but chances of additional flooding continue. With dry weather predicted through the weekend, Ohioans are now shifting their focus toward cleaning up storm debris and recovering from flood damage.

“Now that the worst of the weather is over, state, federal and local agencies have united to begin to assess damages and identifying needs,” said Nancy Dragani, Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “Ohioans who were faced with rain and snow storms are now dealing with the challenge of recovery.”

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is monitoring the state’s situation and preparing for preliminary damage assessment in many of the affected counties.

A total of 59 counties remain under a state of emergency declaration by Governor Bob Taft. The counties are: Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Mercer, Meigs, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Richland, Ross, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Tuscarawas, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne, and Wyandot counties.

STATE AGENCY ACTIVITIES

Ohio Department of Transportation reports an increase in flood-related road closures with 102 US and State Routes currently closed, down from a high of 164. The intersection of Interstate 77 and State Route 212 in Tuscarawas County remains closed along with the ramps at I-270 and US 23 in southern Franklin County. Counties with five or more road closures at this time include: Ashland (5), Athens (6), Guernsey (6), Meigs (5), Muskingum (5), Putnam (7), and Tuscarawas (6). ODOT has offered its Zoar Outpost in northern Tuscarawas County as a staging area for use by emergency responders.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to monitor conditions at its flood control reservoirs and dams around Ohio, including Delaware, Alum Creek, Deer Creek, Paint Creek and Dillon lakes, and the Bolivar Dam in Tuscarawas County. The Corps says all of its reservoirs are operating efficiently and as they were designed to do during periods of heavy precipitation. Controlled water releases continue at Delaware Dam, located north of Columbus, though reservoir levels have decreased to 1.6 feet below the dam's spillway elevation. Equipment is being positioned to remove debris at the Belleville Locks on the Ohio River where several barges had broken loose and lodged in the dam.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources had no active search and rescue missions today, but has loaned a small inflatable motorized rescue boat to the Zoar Fire Department for use if needed in Tuscarawas County.

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency continues to monitor waste water treatment plants and public water supplies. EPA is also assisting with water sampling issues in Coshocton, Crawford, Franklin, Hocking, Marion and Union counties.

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio reports no electrical power outages due to the storms, with scattered phone outages of approximately 5,300, with the bulk in the Dayton area.

Ohio Department of Health is working on water issues at several trailer parks in Muskingum County.

The **American Red Cross** reported that at least six ARC shelters in Defiance, Delaware, Logan and Tuscarawas counties were open overnight, with approximately 50 people.

Ohio Department of Administrative Services reported warehouses were open to distribute cleaning supplies in Bellaire in Belmont County, Byesville in Guernsey County and Marietta in Washington County.

Ohio EMA confirms that nine storm-related deaths have occurred statewide: three in Auglaize County; one in Darke County; one in Defiance County; one in Highland County; two in Henry County and one in Trumbull County. The State Emergency Operations Center will remain open through the weekend, as needed, to allow agencies to coordinate missions.

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EDITORS NOTE: The next update will be released on Tuesday, Jan. 18.