

News Conference Update for Friday, September 16, 2011

**Fire is 80% contained.**

**Destroyed homes: 1244 total confirmed by 911 addressing.**

**Report from Bluebonnet Electric Coop, Mark Rose:**

The recovery process has begun. Customers who plan to rebuild their homes have already placed orders for meters.

To date, 2,071 meters are still without power. However, 2,667 have been restored. Approximately 600 Bluebonnet employees continue to clear right of way corridors, and construct power infrastructure and meters.

While utility crews have had to leave tree debris in right of ways, teams are scheduled to return for retrieval. Bluebonnet will continue to convert tree trunks and limbs into chip debris, and transport to Austin for recycling.

Bluebonnet arborists continue to mark trees on private property that have a 70 percent chance, or higher, of dying, and would affect power lines if toppled. Bluebonnet officials will follow-up with property owners to discuss removal of the tree(s). Residents who have marked trees are encouraged to contact an arborist to get a second opinion.

Officials estimate that power to all meters should be restored by late September.

On a personal note: Rose thanked members of the Southern Area Incident Command Team for the support they provided to Bastrop County.

### **Debris Removal Status**

Commissioner Clara Beckett advised that the county is working with FEMA to obtain a Public Assistance declaration, which will provide the county with the funds needed to begin debris removal.

Residents are encouraged to separate debris in to piles of recyclable materials, such as wood, metal, glass, etc. Homeowners with propane tanks on their property should contact their provider for assistance with reconnection of the tank.

Bastrop County Road and Bridge teams will continue to clear animal remains in roadways. Residents with 10 or less head of livestock can bury the remains on site. If that is not an option, contact the appropriate Road and Bridge office.

Commissioner Beckett thanked all residents for their patience through the clean up process.

### **Bastrop Water Control and Improvement District (WCID)**

Residents who live in portions of Unit 3 and Unit 5 are no longer under a boil water notice. However, a boil water notice does apply to all other customers in the District. Customers are also advised to not use their icemakers until the water has been cleared for human consumption.

### **Bastrop County Sheriff's Office**

Health and Victims Services Coordinator Lisa Jackson urged residents to be mindful of their emotional health, and that of their loved ones, and neighbors. Over the past week, Victims Services staff has been busy providing emotional and material support to residents.

Bastrop County residents should familiarize themselves with the symptoms of depression, such as panic attacks, excessive crying, over or under eating or sleeping, or feeling numb or dazed. If symptoms persist for longer than two weeks, individuals are advised to contact their medical care provider or employee assistance program. Residents without health insurance can contact one of many churches in the County.

### **Texas Department of Motor Vehicles**

The agency is scheduled to open a temporary office in the Bastrop County Courthouse on Monday, September 19. Staff will be available to assist individuals obtain copies of vehicle titles for insurance or other requirements. Residents should be prepared to provide a vehicle identification or a license plate number.

### **FEMA**

To date, more than 2,200 Bastrop County residents have registered with the federal agency for assistance. Representatives urged residents who have not yet registered, to do so online or in person, at their temporary office located at 1602 Hill Street on the west side of the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Center. Representatives of a variety of state and federal agencies are also available at the site to speak with residents about other needs.

FEMA staff is scheduled to staff Bastrop County residents for as long as needed.

### **Emergency Office Coordinator**

County officials have begun to develop a demobilization plan for all of the federal and state resources allocated to assist with the Bastrop County Complex fire. The number of flare-ups reported to emergency officials has steadily decreased. Regardless, fire suppression efforts will be the focus of emergency personnel over the next week.

### **Bastrop County Judge Ronnie McDonald**

Judge McDonald thanked members of the Bastrop, Smithville, Elgin and Cedar Creek communities for their unified support over the past 12 days.

“I’ve learned a valuable lesson from this. In a time of crisis, there is no time for division,” McDonald said. “Over the last 12 days we have been a team. Every part of this community has come together. We will need this focus to be successful in the recovery process.

“We have to remember the team effort,” McDonald added.

### **Donations**

Please send donations to the Ministerial Alliance. To give online <http://www.bcmatx.org/>  
Or mail to PO Box 876 Bastrop, TX 78602

Additional information is available at 512-332-8977 or 332-8661.

No further news conferences regarding the Bastrop County Complex fire until further notice.