



RUSK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Recovery efforts continue in Rusk County – preliminary damage assessment complete.

Recovery work continues throughout Rusk County as clean-up continues after the May 16th tornado that left a 30 mile path of destruction through the County. The hardest hit areas included Cty W/Log Cabin Rd. are southwest of Weyerhaeuser, Amacoy Lake area south of Bruce, and the Conrath area. The National Weather Service has determined that the storm reached EF-3 levels, the strongest along it's path, in the Conrath area.

Preliminary damage assessment work has been completed, which shows nearly 100 residential properties affected with damages in excess of \$2 million dollars. This includes 15 residences destroyed and another 18 residences with major damage –some which may not be salvageable. In addition to the residential damage at least 6 commercial properties reported damage, and significant losses were experienced in the agricultural community with a number of structures being destroyed or suffering significant damage, lost livestock, feed, and fencing. Estimated damage to public infrastructure is currently assessed at just under \$1 million. In total, it is estimated that damages to all properties (residential/commercial/ag/public) from the tornado are in excess of \$11 million and expected to grow. This number will likely change as additional contact is made with property owners and more structural assessment is done on damage properties.

Recovery and response work in the County is now transitioning from addressing health and safety issues and immediate needs to focusing on the long-term recovery and rebuilding by those impacted. County officials continue to work with the various Federal, State, and Regional agencies that may have assistance and support available. Not all disaster relief aid is known at this time, as some depends on if a disaster declaration is made as well as the assessment work of those agencies and their determination of what need exists. The SBA (Small Business Administration, a federal agency) will be touring the damage on Tuesday, June 6th to determine if damage meets the level needed to make SBA loans available to residential and commercial owners. If you have not received a call from Rusk County Emergency Management regarding your damage and insurance coverage, please call (715) 532-2121, so your property can be part of the SBA review.

Rusk County Emergency Management and Wisconsin Emergency Management continue to work with local municipalities on clean-up and debris removal. Private property owners should check with their Township or Village to see if a debris site is available in your jurisdiction.

On behalf of those affected we would like to express our appreciation to those agencies like the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Indianhead Community Action Agency, that responded immediately and aided our community. In addition, thank you to all the volunteers that have come to assist those in need. Rough estimates indicate over 300 volunteers have put in more than 2,000 hours of time to help with clean-up in the aftermath of the storm. In addition, crews from the Wisconsin prison system have spent the last two weeks cutting up and removing debris.

While much has been accomplished to clean-up debris over the last two weeks, we believe there will be a need for additional volunteers and resources in the weeks ahead. We ask that those willing and able to volunteer to call 2-1-1 and indicate your willingness to volunteer, times, skills, etc.

In addition, donations are still needed and appreciated. Funds remain open for donations at Pioneer State Bank and Ladysmith Federal, both in Ladysmith. At this time it is not anticipated that any funds will be provided directly to individuals. Funds have and will continue to be used to support volunteer work, such as lunches, supplies, etc.

Other donations of indoor/outdoor cleaning supplies, bedding, household goods and furniture, clothing are needed and will be accepted at the Connections Store in Ladysmith – which is designated as the local donation center.

Reminders and Resources for those impacted:

- Disaster victims should continue to document damage and provide information to Rusk County Emergency Management by dialing 2-1-1. The information gathered will be used to help determine what possible state programs may be available to provide recovery assistance.

Most disaster aid would only cover uninsured losses for primary residences. It is not designed to replace personal items but rather to assist with home repairs. It is important for homeowners, renters and businesses to work with their insurance company to determine what is covered and how to file a claim. Disaster victims should make a detailed list of all damaged or lost property and take photos of the damage.

In addition, out-buildings (unattached garages, sheds, storage barns) and seasonal properties will not likely be eligible for assistance.

- Any residents in need of volunteer assistance to clear debris from the recent storm damage should call 2-1-1. They will need a name, phone number, and location.
- Any storm impacted resident in need of general recovery assistance can also call 2-1-1, and a County official will follow-up with you.
- For those needing immediate financial assistance due to lost or not-suitable housing as a result of the storm, a few sources are potentially available. WHEDA emergency funds are being administered through the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (715) 635-2197 and Workforce Resource has emergency funds (primarily for families with children) (855) 792-5439.
- Those in agricultural community with damage and in need of assistance should be in contact with local Farm Service Agency/USDA office to see if assistance is available to them. Ladysmith (715) 532-3786 or Barron (715) 537-5645. For damage to conservation structure or fencing also contact Rusk County Land & Water Conservation at (715) 532-2162.
- If you have been affected and have immediate needs and have not already been in contact with the Red Cross their contact number is 715-559-7365.
- Anyone in the need of clothing, food, bedding or household furniture should contact:
 - ICAA Connections Store in Ladysmith 715.532.7542
 - The Salvation Army is also available to provide assistance at 715.403.1285
- Rusk County Health and Human Services may be available to assist residents within their regular scope of programs, or can direct you to other assistance. (715) 532-2299