



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

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State Flood Assistance Headed for Southeastern South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Sunday that a Type-2 Incident Management Team has been dispatched to the Yankton-Dakota Dunes area to assist with flood-prevention efforts along the Missouri River.

Lt. Gov. Matt Michels also will go to that area on Monday to help coordinate operations.

“We are looking at river flows that exceed 100-year floodplain levels,” Michels, a Yankton native said. “It takes about 24 hours for an increase in releases upstream at Oahe Dam to reach Gavins Point. I’m urging residents in the downstream areas not to squander that time. Use it wisely to protect your family and your property.”

Gov. Daugaard said he has asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide flood inundation maps by early Monday for communities along the length of the river, from Pierre/Fort Pierre on downstream. Serious flooding will occur in many places along the river, he said.

“Be assured that we are doing everything in our power and reacting as quickly as possible to the information we have – as it becomes available – to help threatened communities along the entire length of the river,” he said.

Despite protective measures by state, local and federal officials, people whose property is at risk to flooding should continue with individual efforts to protect that property and remove or move their belongings to second stories of homes and businesses, the Governor said. Flooding in coming days and weeks along the river will damage or destroy property because there is no guarantee that levees, sandbags and other protective measures will be entirely effective, he said.

“If you live in a vulnerable area along the river, assume that water will inundate your property,” Gov Daugaard said. “Keep working to protect your home and safeguard your personal property. If you believe you have a chance at success, you should work even harder to make sure you achieve it.”

It is inevitable that flooding in the near future will force many people from their homes along the river, the Governor said.

“It is very distressing to lose your property, but things matter far less than injuries or the loss of human lives,” he said.

In the Pierre/Fort Pierre area, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided late Saturday to increase the height of the emergency levees by two feet because flows from the mainstem dams will be increased even more than earlier expected. The Corps says it’s necessary to draw even more water through the dams than first thought because widespread rains are forecast through late Monday in the Upper Missouri River Basin.

“The flood-prevention job has suddenly become enlarged within the same time constraints, and that is going to make it even more difficult to finish the levees and other protective measures before the larger volumes of water get to our communities,” Gov. Dugaard said.

The Governor added that he is heartened by individual efforts to save personal property and by the thousands of people who have volunteered for those efforts.

“I’ve always marveled at the spirit of camaraderie in South Dakota,” he said. “But it’s one thing to say you’ll pitch in and another thing to actually do it. People in this state are doers, and I couldn’t be more proud of them. We are going to get through this.”