

Agenda Item #35 for September 12, 2023

GENERAL BUSINESS

35. Status Report on Leon County's Preparation, Response, and Recovery Efforts
Related to Hurricane Idalia
(County Administrator/ County Administration)

**Leon County
Board of County Commissioners**

Notes for Agenda Item #35

Leon County Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Item #35

September 12, 2023

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator

Title: Status Report on Leon County's Preparation, Response, and Recovery Efforts Related to Hurricane Idalia

Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Department/ Division Review:	Alan Rosenzweig, Deputy County Administrator Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Mathieu Cavell, Director of Community Relations and Resilience
Lead Staff/ Project Team:	Kevin Peters, Director of Emergency Management Miranda Hernandez, Management Analyst

Statement of Issue:

This item provides the Board with a status report regarding Leon County's preparation and response efforts related to Hurricane Idalia. At this time, the assessment and recovery process is still ongoing, and Emergency Management staff is conducting debriefing meetings with County personnel and partner agencies. This status report is intended to serve as a summary of activities taken to date by Leon County to prepare for, respond to, and recover from Hurricane Idalia. In addition, this item provides an update on the financial impacts of the storm and a preliminary outlook regarding Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance.

Fiscal Impact:

This item does not have a fiscal impact; however, an update is provided related to the ongoing efforts to secure State and Federal reimbursement for the County's pre- and post-storm expenses. Leon County was included in the federal disaster declaration related to Hurricane Idalia for emergency protective measures (pre-storm). At minimum, 75% of the County's emergency protective measures will be reimbursed by the federal government and 12.5% will be reimbursed by the State under the Public Assistance Program. The County's emergency management consultant has been engaged to document the detailed storm-related costs associated with emergency protective measures for reimbursement.

To be reimbursed for any other storm-related expenses (e.g., debris, utility infrastructure restoration, permanent road work and/or culvert repair, etc.), Leon County must meet a minimum aggregate dollar threshold of \$1.3 million, including all eligible entities within the County. Preliminary damage assessments have been provided to the State and FEMA. At the time of this writing, the County is awaiting a determination by FEMA for any other financial assistance other than emergency protective measures (pre-storm).

In 2008, the Board approved the creation of the Catastrophe Reserve Fund. The fund was created to ensure access to emergency funds needed in case of a declared local state of emergency. Adequate funding is available for the County's anticipated expenses associated with Hurricane Idalia. When final damage estimates are calculated, the Catastrophe Reserve budget can be adjusted during the normal year-end budget adjustment process.

Staff Recommendation:

Option #1: Accept the status report on Leon County's preparation, response, and recovery efforts related to Hurricane Idalia.

Report and Discussion

Background:

This item provides the Board with a status report regarding Leon County's preparation and response efforts related to Hurricane Idalia. At this time, the assessment and recovery process is still ongoing, and Emergency Management staff is conducting debriefing meetings with County personnel and partner agencies. This status report is intended to serve as a summary of activities taken to date by Leon County to prepare for, respond to, and recover from Hurricane Idalia. In addition, this item provides an update on the financial impacts of the storm and a preliminary outlook regarding Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance.

Emergency management professionals in Florida focus much of their training on tropical weather events and opportunities to enhance disaster response activities and resilience. Leon County Emergency Management (LCEM) prepares, coordinates, and trains year-round in anticipation of emergencies which require the highest level of coordination and resources. The preparation and training extend throughout the County organization and with external agency partners each year. LCEM also serves as the regional coordinator with the Florida Division of Emergency Management for emergency management services and programs. Public education is vital to community preparedness and resilience. Through Leon County Community and Media Relations, LCEM educates the public by cohosting events including the Citizen Engagement Series focused on hurricane preparedness and performing mock emergency activation exercises, the "Build Your Bucket" event to highlight the importance of having a disaster plan and kit, and produces the annual Disaster Survival Guide in partnership with the Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross; the Apalachee Regional Planning Council; and neighboring counties. These year-round efforts position the County, the public, and external agency partners to better prepare and respond to weather emergencies.

Hurricane Idalia was a historic and unprecedented storm which inflicted far-reaching damage throughout Florida's Big Bend region and other areas in the United States. Fortunately for our community, Leon County escaped the full brunt of Hurricane Idalia as the eye of the storm made landfall near Keaton Beach. The northeasterly storm track resulted in substantial damage to rural communities east of Leon County. In support of neighboring communities, LCEM assisted the State Emergency Operations Center with emergency management operations including personnel and equipment.

Though Hurricane Idalia shifted away from Leon County before making landfall, the County was prepared for the major hurricane and demonstrated once again why it was the first in the nation to be recognized by FEMA as a Hurricane Strong Community. Through lessons learned from prior tropical weather events and emergency activations, the County implemented 213 recommendations based on 288 findings across all aspects of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities. These findings and recommendations were detailed in the after-action reports following three tropical weather events (Hermine, Irma, and Michael) that impacted the County to provide a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the plans, preparations, response, and recovery efforts associated with the storms. The recommendations identify opportunities for

continuous improvement of Leon County's organizational readiness to manage future emergencies and enhance community resilience.

Significant Enhancements since Hermine, Irma, and Michael Relative to Hurricane Idalia:

Leon County has made multiple strategic updates to its Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan based on recommendations made in Hurricane After-Action Reports. Several stand out as particularly critical to the success of Leon County's preparedness, response, and recovery efforts relative to Hurricane Idalia. The recommendation to return LCEM under the County organization on a year-round basis has facilitated a much closer alignment of the County's emergency management function with other County operations, and has enabled LCEM to streamline year-round coordination with County departments and external agencies, including staffing, training, and field operations.

In 1999, the Board entered into an Interlocal Agreement shifting the day-to-day oversight of Leon County Emergency Management to the Sheriff, only to return under the Board in the event of a disaster. Because the emergency management field involves the coordination of public works, communications, information technology and geographic information systems, volunteer services, services provided by partner organizations, emergency shelters, and many other critical functions, the After-Action Report recommended returning this function to the County organization on a year-round basis. At the January 24, 2017 meeting, the Board approved the return of the day-to-day oversight of LCEM under the Board, reporting to the County Administrator. The alignment of LCEM with Leon County Community & Media Relations ensures the highest level of coordination with other departments and divisions of Leon County government throughout the year, enhanced coordination of emergency management training opportunities for County staff, and facilitated even greater sharing of information and resources during emergency events. This realignment of LCEM under the County organization has also supported and facilitated the implementation of several other recommendations in the Hurricane Hermine After-Action Report related to citizen engagement and community preparedness initiatives.

Additionally, the recommendation to coordinate with Leon County Schools, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Big Bend Disaster Animal Rescue Team to identify specific opportunities has enhanced shelter operations and the management of shelter staff, facilities, and supplies. At the May 8, 2018 meeting, the Board approved a tri-party agreement among Leon County, Leon County Schools, and the American Red Cross to make improvements to the County's plan for risk sheltering operations. These improvements leveraged the assets and resources of each agency to ensure the best coordination of facilities, staffing, supplies, and communication during risk sheltering operations. The close coordination among all agencies has significantly enhanced the operation of emergency shelters, including special needs and pet accessible shelters, to ensure citizens' safety during the height of a disaster.

Lastly, improvements to the distribution of resources, including organizing regional volunteers and donations management through the Big Bend Community Organizations Active in Disaster, securing state-owned generators for traffic signals to ensure the fastest deployment following a widespread power outage, relocating sandbag operations from J. Lee Vause Park to Fred George

Park to provide better accessibility to citizens, and coordinating with emergency management directors from across the region to share resources, information, and best practices further increase disaster resilience within Leon County.

As summarized in the Analysis section of this item, Leon County has made significant enhancements since Hurricanes Hermine, Irma, and Michael in the area of community preparedness. Today, the Leon County community is better informed and prepared for natural disasters as a direct result of lessons learned from Hermine, which led to greater attendance at the County's hurricane-related public events, improvement and broader distribution of the annual Disaster Preparedness Guide, vastly increased use of the enhanced Citizens Connect mobile app, participation in training events and exercises, and ultimately earned Leon County the recognition as the first local government to be awarded FEMA's Hurricane Strong Community designation.

Overview of Hurricane Idalia and Impacts to Leon County:

One of the most powerful hurricanes to ever hit the Big Bend, Idalia made landfall in Florida on August 30, causing catastrophic damage to entire communities in many areas of the State. LCEM began tracking Hurricane Idalia beginning on August 23 when it developed as a tropical depression in the northwestern Caribbean. Early forecasts indicated that Idalia would likely approach the Gulf of Mexico and travel north, following a track towards Florida's Big Bend. Accordingly, during most of the period that Leon County Emergency Management tracked the storm, Leon County was expecting to sustain heavy rain and winds. In the days before making landfall, Idalia was forecasted to strengthen to a Category 4 hurricane and its path shifted slightly west, placing Leon County in a more direct path of the storm and requiring County personnel and partner agencies to transition to an active preparation, response, and restoration posture. Just prior to landfall, Idalia shifted, coming ashore near Keaton Beach as a Category 3 hurricane. Leon County experienced sustained winds, with gusts up to 46 miles per hour, and an average of 4" to 5" of rain across the community.

Preparations began well in advance of Idalia's landfall and continued around the clock prior to and during the storm in order to best position the County's response and recovery efforts. The Leon County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated from August 27 to August 31 for a total of 72 hours during the incident. "Full activation," with all partner agencies represented in the EOC on day and night shifts around the clock, was in place from August 29 through August 30. During Idalia, an average of 40 personnel per day were stationed at the EOC, with hundreds more Leon County and partner agency staff and volunteers working in the field.

Throughout the incident, approximately 53 Leon County staff participated by coordinating efforts to keep citizens prepared and informed, establishing shelters to ensure the safety of Leon County citizens and evacuees from other areas, clearing roadways and restoring critical infrastructure following the storm, assisting citizens with navigating the recovery process, and much more. These and other specific actions taken by Leon County staff to prepare for, respond to, and recover from Hurricane Idalia are included in the following section of this item.

Analysis:

As previously described, the Board's 2017 decision to return the day-to-day oversight of LCEM to the County organization under the County Administrator has facilitated a much closer alignment of the County's emergency management function with other County operations. As a hurricane or tropical storm approaches, County Administration is responsible for coordinating with the County Attorney's Office to prepare a declaration of a local state of emergency for the Chairman's signature and assigning personnel to support EOC and field operations before and throughout the event. During an activation of the EOC, County Administration provides critical guidance regarding the deployment of County resources and serves as a liaison to the Board, constitutional officers, state and federal delegation members by providing comprehensive response and recovery information which can then be shared with the public through social media channels. Once the storm has passed, County Administration oversees the damage assessment phase and works with OMB to seek FEMA reimbursement for storm-related expenses.

The alignment of LCEM with Leon County Community & Media Relations ensures the highest level of coordination for disseminating public information and communicating with outside agencies during an emergency activation. The following is a summary, organized by work area, of the County's preparedness activities related to Hurricane Idalia, response and recovery efforts, and current status and outlook for each work area following the storm.

Emergency Operations/ Leon County Emergency Management

Preparation:

- Tracked Hurricane Idalia's path beginning on August 23 when it originated as a tropical depression in the Caribbean.
- Distributed tropical storm and hurricane watches and warnings as they occurred, beginning with the initial tropical storm warning on August 28.
- Conducted 12 conference calls beginning on August 27 to share information related to the storm and to coordinate a planned response. From August 28 to August 30, conference calls were held twice daily at 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
- Activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on Monday, August 27 to coordinate the preparedness, response, and recovery efforts of 28 distinct agencies.
- Reached out to skilled nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Leon County to ensure that they were aware of the potential storm track and to verify that they had reviewed their emergency plan and were ready to implement it. Also verified the availability and capacity of backup power generation at each facility, as well as emergency evacuation plans in the event of a long-term power outage.
- Coordinated with the County Attorney's Office on August 29 to issue a mandatory evacuation for mobile and manufactured homes in order to give citizens adequate time to leave the area.

Operations:

- Operated the EOC for 72 hours starting on August 27th with an average of 40 personnel working per day during full EOC activation.
- Served as the lead entity responsible for the operation of the EOC throughout the event.
- Served as the lead entity for requesting assistance and resources from the State of Florida.
- Continued to make contact with each skilled nursing home and assisted living facility throughout the event at least daily and called after the storm passed to assess each facility's situation.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Returned to normal EOC operations on Friday, September 1.
- County and City staff completed preliminary damage assessments on Thursday, August 31 to support a request for potential federal recovery assistance.
- Coordinating the submittal data and information to FEMA for potential recovery assistance and cost reimbursement.
- Continuing to coordinate ongoing recovery efforts with community partner agencies.
- The State EOC has requested local assistance to support its ongoing operations. LCEM coordinated the deployment of personnel from LCEM and the Tallahassee-Leon County Geographic Information Systems Department to assist State EOC operations.

Community & Media Relations

Preparation:

- Promoted the Citizens Connect App through the Leon County Emergency Information Portal (EIP), television, radio, billboards, print media, and other platforms. As a result, nearly 2,000 downloads of the Citizens Connect App occurred since the start of 2023 Hurricane season on June 1, 2023.
- Revised and refocused the 2023 Disaster Survival Guide to be more intuitive, more informative, and to feature additional resources and assistance available from community partners.
- Distributed over 70,000 copies of the 2023 Disaster Survival Guide throughout the community and online through the Tallahassee Democrat and Capital Outlook. Also announced the availability of the Disaster Survival Guide at the Hurricane Kickoff Press Conference on June 1, 2023.
- Hosted the Build Your Bucket disaster preparedness event in partnership with the American Red Cross and the City of Tallahassee. Over 120 citizens attended and received supplies critical during a disaster: flashlight, weather radio, batteries, etc.
- Communicated to citizens through social media, press releases, GovDelivery, and the Leon County EIP prior to the storm regarding disaster preparedness, sandbag locations, and preliminary office and facility closures.

- Coordinated with Leon County Schools, the Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, and other partners to open 8 emergency shelters which housed over 500 people and 60 pets during the incident.
- Volunteer Services recruited volunteers and activated the Citizen Information Line (CIL) at the EOC on Monday, August 28.
- Recruited volunteers in anticipation of opening a Comfort Station at the Main Library and coordinated with non-profit partner agencies to set up information tables to assist citizens with questions regarding the recovery process.

Operations:

- Updated the EIP throughout the event. This information included information on preparedness, road closures, school/office closings, sandbag locations, open shelters, damage assessment reports, and more.
- Provided a “Hurricane Idalia Daily Brief” to the public for four days starting on August 27. Daily briefs were distributed to nearly 8,000 email subscribers and posted on social media.
- Coordinated one press conferences with consistent information that involved all media partners.
- Issued 6 news advisories and releases.
- Provided 65 social media Facebook updates before, during, and after the event which received a total of 21,912 engagements, including likes, comments or shares.
- Provided immediate response to citizen inquiries via social media, responding to each inquiry in under 30 minutes.
- Maintained operation of the CIL throughout the event. Utilizing 15 volunteers, received over 758 citizen calls totaling more than 338 hours.
- Partnered with America’s Second Harvest of the Big Bend to coordinate a donation of food, water, and hygiene products to assist Hurricane Idalia disaster survivors in other areas of the state.

Current Status and Outlook:

- All public information efforts related to Hurricane Idalia have resulted in Leon County’s message being seen, heard, and read nearly 8 million times.
- Continuing to promote information regarding the recovery process through social media.
- Promoting information regarding the damage assessment process on social media and the EIP.
- Issued a press release and promoting on social media and the EIP information about yard debris removal and free drop-off of storm debris at all Rural Waste Service Centers and the Solid Waste Management Waste Facility.

Public Works

Preparation:

- Closed the Lake Munson Dam in anticipation of heavy rains associated with Hurricane Idalia, in accordance with the Lake Munson Action Plan. The Lake Munson Dam was reopened on Friday, September 1 after staff conducted a check on the conditions at Lake Munson as well as the downstream water levels.
- Inspected vehicles and equipment, checked potential flooding areas to clean blockage, tested pumps, conducted an inventory of barricades, and loaded trucks to activate sandbag locations.
- Coordinated with the County's fuel supplier to ensure availability during and after the storm to continue operations.
- Contacted debris removal contractors for possible support with "cut and toss" operations to facilitate faster openings of blocked roads.
- Identified staff to assist shelter operations and the Citizen Information Line.
- Deployed variable message boards and signs to Red Cross Shelter locations.
- Distributed over 33,000 sandbags at the Solid Waste Management Facility, Ranchero Road at Oakridge Road, the Northeast Branch Library, Fort Braden Community Park, and Fred George Park.
- Activated Alpha/Bravo shifts consisting of 14 crews working 12 to 24 hour shifts to expedite road clearing efforts and to provide additional administrative support.
- Pre-deployed crews to six previously selected hardened school locations (Canopy Oaks Elementary School, Chiles High School, Oakridge Elementary School, Fort Braden School, Montford Middle School, and Chaires Elementary School) due to their strategic locations as well as one location at the Public Works Operations Center.

Operations:

- Began responding to downed trees and other calls for service on Wednesday, August 30 once weather conditions were safe to do so.
- Coordinated road clearing task forces with the City of Tallahassee and Talquin Electric to remove electrical lines entangled in trees.
- Overall, responded to 25 downed trees blocking roadways All roads cleared and reopened by 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 30.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Debris removal and monitoring contracts are on standby until FEMA determines whether the County will be eligible for reimbursement.
- Returned to normal operating hours on August 31.

Office of Resource Stewardship

Preparation:

- Confirmed, updated and distributed all staff rosters.
- Made identification badges to be utilized should staff have to return to storm-damaged areas secured by law enforcement.

Facilities Management:

- Prepared all County buildings prior to the storm, including inspecting generators, topping off fuel tanks, checking rain gutters and drains, placing sandbags as needed, removing wind-borne hazards, and adjusting security settings.
- Configured the Public Safety Complex (PSC) for full EOC activation prior to the storm. The PSC is designed to be able to operate on generator power for up to 14 days.
- Arranged for additional security and custodial services at the PSC.
- Initiated standard storm protocol, shifting the LCSO Detention Center to full generator prior to the storm to ensure 24x7 continuity of power.
- Planned for staffing and logistical needs the day following the storm, identified vacant office space for use as needed following the storm, and pre-staged key equipment to provide for rapid response.
- Prepared to activate post-storm Comfort Station by assisting in mobilization of food supplies and scheduling of additional custodial services.
- Prepared to activate post-storm Points of Distribution (PODs) serving as rural distribution centers.

Parks & Recreation:

- Prepared all County parks prior to the storm, including canceling existing programming and reservations for community centers and campgrounds, and removing wind-borne hazards.
- Assisted with staffing the four County sandbag locations and Public Works chainsaw crews.

Solid Waste:

- Coordinated with Waste Pro to advise customers to safely store their garbage and recycling containers prior to the storm and prepare for service delay on the day of the storm.
- Ensured continuity of waste service collection and disposal with waste hauler, recycling vendor, waste collection contractors, and the City of Tallahassee.
- Operated extended hours at the Transfer Station to accommodate key users and coordinated reciprocal hours with the waste hauler and landfill disposal.

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- Coordinated pre-storm support for fuel recycling and other hazardous waste partners resulting in 254 customers (or 9,080 lbs. of household hazardous waste) immediately after the storm.
- Prepared the Solid Waste Management Facility, Transfer Station, and Rural Waste Service Centers prior to the storm, including inspecting generators and topping off fuel tanks, as well as expediting operations at the Transfer Station to allow hauling trailers to be staged safely indoors.

Operations:

Facilities Management:

- Procured and unloaded sleeping cots for use at the Public Safety Complex.
- Provided logistical support for mobilizing food and other resources to comfort stations.
- Hosted PSC operations, including uninterrupted service of power, cooling, custodial, security with around-the-clock on-site staff support.
- Prepared warehouse space in the Huntington Oaks complex to serve as a POD logistics site.
- Assessed County properties for any reports of damage. No major damage was reported at any County property.

Solid Waste

- Suspended curbside Solid Waste services on Wednesday, August 30 due to high winds and storm debris scattered on roadways. Waived all fees for citizens to bring yard debris to the Solid Waste and Rural Waste facility from Thursday, August 31 through Sunday, September 3.
- Provided access to all City and County residents to Rural Waste Service Centers on Thursday August 31, a day the sites are typically closed.

Current Status and Outlook:

Facilities Management

- Assessed County buildings for any damage. No major damage was reported at any County building.

Parks & Recreation

- Assessed County parks for any reports of damage. Main entrance sign to Apalachee Regional Park was damaged by a downed tree. However, no major damage was reported at any County property.

Solid Waste

- Immediately following the storm, modified operational hours for the Solid Waste Management Facility and Transfer Station including Sunday, normally a non-operational day.
- Added staff capacity to assist the high volume of waste-related calls to ensure the County's responsiveness to all citizens.
- Resumed service for household garbage and recycling on Thursday, August 31. All routes were delayed by one day for the remainder of the week.

Emergency Medical Services

Preparation:

- Prior to hurricane season, reviewed the EMS Division's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Participated in emergency management conference calls beginning Sunday, August 27.
- Conducted internal staff meetings between Monday, August 28 and Wednesday, August 30 to establish staffing plans, prepare equipment, and finalize preparedness activities.
- Conducted a response planning teleconference on Tuesday, August 29 with Tallahassee Fire Department, the Volunteer Fire Departments, and EMS.
- Compiled information from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services regarding the number and status of Medicare beneficiaries in each county in the region to support the Florida Department of Health in Leon County and other EOC agencies.
- Initiated EMS' Emergency Operations Plan for tropical system impacts on Monday, August 27.
- Issued first internal situational report reminding staff to take protective measures at home and to be prepared for possible extra shift assignments on Tuesday, August 28.
- Coordinated with LCEM, Florida Department of Health in Leon County, Leon County Schools, and StarMetro to plan for transportation needs to the Special Needs Shelter. Provided ambulance transportation to individuals unable to be transported in another manner to the Special Needs Shelter.
- Checked and ordered additional equipment and supplies to ensure operational readiness. This included facilitating ambulance repairs with Fleet Management.
- Identified strategic ambulance staging locations and areas of last refuge throughout the County for members deployed in the field which included schools, fire stations, County facilities, and hospitals.
- Conducted planning and logistical support for staff assigned to work extra assignments. Due to the forecasted severity and timing of the storm impacts, EMS had all members scheduled to work during day shift on Wednesday, August 30 report for duty by 4 a.m. Members working the night of Tuesday, August 29 were retained for a period of time due to weather conditions.

Operations:

- Responded to 543 requests for service from Wednesday, August 30 through September 1, 2023.
- Assisted with transportation of individuals that required transportation to and from the Special Needs Shelter; and, provided paramedics at the shelter from Tuesday, August 29 through Thursday, August 31.
- Provided staff at the EOC from Tuesday, August 29 through Wednesday, August 30.
- Deployed additional ambulances and EMS dispatchers; specialty equipment such as golf-cart ambulances; and personnel from the evening of Tuesday, August 29 through Thursday, August 31.
- Remained in close contact with hospital partners and deployed an EMS liaison to the TMH Emergency Operations Center at their request. Remained in close contact with HCA Florida Capital Hospital. All emergency medical agencies remained operational and capable of accepting patients throughout the event.
- Coordinated community medical needs with the Florida Department of Health in Leon County and the Big Bend Regional Healthcare Coalition.
- Provided support to citizens with medical equipment concerns, as well as medical equipment and supply issues at citizens' homes.
- Assisted citizens in moving mobility-challenged individuals to assist with evacuation and/or transport to shelter locations.
- Assisted citizens that are dependent on oxygen and/or durable medical devices and coordinated services with medical supply providers.

Current Status and Outlook:

- On Friday, September 1, the number of requests for service returned to pre-storm levels.
- EMS returned to normal operating conditions and staffing on Friday, September 1.

Animal Control

Preparation:

- Checked equipment and supplies and ensured the Emergency Mobile Animal Shelter was ready to deploy.
- Placed a request for the Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) unit from the State Agricultural Response Team.

Operations:

- Hosted pet accessible shelters at Chiles High School and the Special Needs Shelter at Florida High School throughout the incident.

- Deployed kennels and other resources to all other emergency shelter locations in order to accommodate anyone taking shelter with a pet.
- Monitored shelter populations and delivered additional resources throughout the event to shelters receiving a large number of animals. Over 60 pets took shelter at 7 different shelter locations throughout the event.
- Staffed Animal Control Officers at Chiles High School and the Special Needs Shelter at Florida High School overnight on August 29.
- Moved pet shelter supplies provisions from emergency shelters to host shelters on Thursday, August 31.
- Remained on standby to receive animals until American Red Cross host shelters closed on Friday, September 1.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Resumed normal operations on Friday, September 1 with no noticeable call increases.
- Planning a debriefing and review of the division's emergency operations plan and response to Hurricane Idalia.

Human Services & Community Partnerships

Preparation:

- Established a schedule for Alpha/Bravo shifts for HSCP staff at the EOC.
- Provided contact information for CHSP agencies to Community & Media Relations in order to share all updates regarding Hurricane Idalia.
- Participated in the planning and preparation of Comfort Station operations.
- Worked with Emergency Management and the Big Bend CoC to alert unhoused individuals about emergency shelter operations.

Operations:

- Contacted housing contractors to assess any damage that may have occurred to active housing rehabilitation/replacement projects.
- Provided an update on storm impacts and initial damage assessment findings to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.
- Participated on COAD calls to assess agency and community needs during and in the immediate aftermath of the storm.
- Provided free emergency tarps to County residents with roof damage.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Coordinating with CMR to inform residents that Emergency Repair Funding is available for qualified residents with homes that may have been impacted by Hurricane Idalia.

- Monitoring for any state or federal funding made available for disaster recovery.

Development Support & Environmental Management

Preparation:

- Ensured that County vehicles were topped off with fuel on a daily basis.
- Ensured field staff had appropriate rain gear, a working phone and mobile desk computer charger in their County vehicle, and ensured County vehicles were equipped with all necessary storm-related emergency supplies including bottled water and flashlights with extra batteries.
- Conducted site visits to all active development sites before the storm to ensure that all permitted and applicable sediment and erosion control measures were being appropriately implemented, and onsite building materials were adequately secured.

Operations:

- Received Red Cross Shelter training and assisted in staffing emergency shelters.
- Assisted in staffing the EOC and Citizens Information Line.
- Assisted with staffing community damage assessment teams.
- Coordinated with the City of Tallahassee Growth Management Department to notify electrical contractors of the procedures for electrical reconnections after the storm to ensure procedural consistency between jurisdictions.

Current Status and Outlook:

- After completing damage assessment-related activities, DSEM resumed normal operations with full staffing on Friday, September 1. Based on the limited amount of damage to structures caused with the storm, it is anticipated that permitting-related activity will be minimally impacted.

Tourism

Preparation:

- Coordinated daily staff meetings to provide updates and review protocols regarding communication with industry partners and providing daily updates/communication to the industry via the Visit Tallahassee Industry Partners' Facebook page.

Operations:

- Participated in twice-daily emergency management conference calls, updated staff with key information and action items.
- Activated the Travel & Weather Alert page on VisitTallahassee.com on Monday, August 28. The page provided links to state, regional and local resources including the Leon County EIP and Citizens Connect mobile app.

- Paused/redirected all active advertising/marketing efforts and social media activity to advisories for travelers/evacuees.
- Closed the Visitor Information Centers (Railroad and Cascades) at noon on Tuesday, August 29 and reopened on Friday, September 1.
- Provided regular updates to industry partners via the Visit Tallahassee Industry Partners' Facebook page.
- Communicated local information to Visit Florida and the Visit Florida Welcome Centers, Brand USA and Destinations International on the status of the destination.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Continuing to provide marketing messages that support current tourism industry events and partners. This coordination is essential in ensuring the traveling public that Leon County continues to host visitors and that all hotels, attractions, events and activities are fully functioning in the destination.

Office of Information & Technology

Preparation:

- Updated the staffing plan to include MIS/GIS onsite and offsite for the EOC as well as expanded the on-call support of the Technical Services Center for desktop and technical support for the entire event, increased on-call support for each category of support (web, network, systems, JIS, work order management, and tech support).
- Prepared the EOC computers, GIS equipment, and audio/visual equipment for full activation.
- Redirected online Citizen Service Request notifications to the EOC to ensure continued response to emergency citizen needs.
- Coordinated with CMR to maintain updates to the Emergency Information Portal (EIP).
- OIT staff directed to take home laptops and verify charging and ability to connect to Virtual Private Network (VPN) ahead of the storm for testing purposes.
- Postponed all overnight GIS software backups and cancelled nightly scripts to eliminate any downtime while Idalia was coming ashore.
- Charged and updated Damage Assessment phones in advance of the storm.
- Updated Open for Business layers, apps, and content to allow OEV to track the Open/Closed status of critical recovery related business categories.
- Updated content for services, basemaps, and apps to be used in the field for Damage Assessments.
- Created a new Attachment Viewer application to allow LCEM staff to review citizen-uploaded pictures of damage.

- Coordinated with communications providers (Firstnet, Lumen, & Verizon) to provide up-to-date contact information for call escalations.
- Coordinated with Facilities Management on switching over to generator power at the Jail Remote Server Center (RSC) to avoid power-related switchover issues.
- Provided power strips, extension cords, and tape for the anticipated Comfort Station at the Main Library.
- Set up, tested, and provided a StarLink satellite solution and 5 Wi-Fi phones for the Consolidated Dispatch Agency as a precaution in case Internet, cellular, and phones were interrupted due to the storm. The CDA was positioned, if necessary, to make and receive Wi-Fi calls with Okaloosa County who was serving as the backup 911 call center.
- Changed out email footer with storm information created by CMR.
- Verified with Facilities Management that the mobile generator was located in the Courthouse and ready to deploy, if needed, for the Courthouse core network.

Operations:

- Provided 25 smartphones for use by the Damage Assessment teams with previously developed (in-house) software application.
- Updated after-hours phone messaging for County main line as well as numerous Constitutional Offices.
- Coordinated with the Clerk's Office to run the payroll a day early.
- Coordinated with Leon County Human Resources and the Clerk's Office to document storm-related work hours.
- Provided mapping support for roadway obstructions and shelter locations.
- Provided a mapping application to view, edit, and analyze various data sets such as roadway obstructions, shelters, traffic signal status, and traffic signals requiring generator power. This application was used throughout the EOC and affiliated agencies.
- Prepared and printed several maps of the damage assessment zones for the assessors to use in the field.
- Provided Initial Damage Assessment training in multiple sessions to City and County staff.
- Provided user support for tracking EOC activities through the WebEOC incident management system.
- Coordinated connectivity with Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) for data sharing
- Created an editing app for Emergency Information Portal (EIP) mapping content and provided staff training.
- Repurposed original official Shelter app and built connectivity with the State's WebEOC database for sharing state-wide sheltering data.

- Rebuilt Road Obstructions dashboard feeding from Leon County's WebEOC Operations Board, fed by inbound calls from CIL.
- Created service view and dashboard to display Damaged Structure content from Leon Co WebEOC Operations Board for inbound calls from CIL.
- Updated weather feed links for Emergency Management situational awareness apps and EIP maps.
- Updated a Collection application that continuously displays all Emergency Management related maps, apps, and dashboards in a loop on one of the primary display screens throughout EOC.
- Coordinated with Homeland Security to provide access to our 2022 imagery services for counties to the east of Leon County. This included imagery services for Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor Counties.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Received over 84,000 views to critical County websites during August 27 – September 5.
 - 75% of those views were accessed by mobile devices (compared to 47% during Hurricane Michael).
- 760 activities were tracked in WebEOC.
- All County applications are operational, and all facilities have network and Internet connectivity with minimal, if any, damage to infrastructure.
- Continuing to provide mapping support for damage assessments.
- Continuing to explore backup Internet options with the City.
- Continuing to explore data center options relative to power stability at the secondary County data center.
- Three GIS staff are deployed to Madison County to assist GIS mutual aid activities post storm. Assignment is initially set for two weeks.

Office of Intervention & Detention Alternatives

Preparation:

- Coordinated with Court Administration to implement protocols for continuation of Jail intake screenings, supervised pretrial releases, and First Appearance preparation and hearings.
- Informed clients on the Office of Intervention & Detention Alternatives (IDA) automated messaging line of current notifications and/or instructions to maintain compliance with court-ordered conditions.
- Prepared and secured documents to ensure staff's ability to continue community supervision of offenders assigned to the Supervised Pretrial Release and Probation Divisions.

- Contacted electronic monitoring offenders providing instructions on resources to maintain compliance with court-ordered conditions. For eligible offenders, staff provided the Emergency Information Line and Citizens Connect mobile app for community resources.
- Collaborated with the Sheriff's Office and community partners to provide sheltering for offenders with community contact restrictions.

Operations:

- Staffed key personnel for continued 24/7 supervision of electronic monitoring offenders.
- Assisted Animal Control by identifying offenders ordered community service to assist with demobilization of shelter equipment and supplies.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Returned to normal operations on Friday, September 1.
- Activated protocols to ensure defendants unable to meet required weekly drug and/or alcohol testing during the 1.5 days of inactivity were placed back in the seven-day rotation when normal operations resumed on Friday, September 1.

Library Services

Preparation:

- Contacted Library staff on Tuesday, August 29 to confirm staff assignments for Emergency Assistance Designations.
- Closed all library book drops when the libraries closed on Tuesday, August 29, to avoid water intrusion and damaged materials.
- Established staff schedules and backup for the Main Library Comfort Station to open on Thursday, August 31.

Operations:

- Library staff members assisted with the Citizens Information Line and pet shelters.
- Received deliveries of bottled water and snacks on August 29th in preparation for the Comfort Station at the Main Library. Items were also delivered to the Woodville Branch Library as a Comfort Station if needed.
 - Library staff assisted HSCP in staging all supplies in the large program rooms.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Normal library operations resumed on Friday, September 1.

Planning, Land Use, and Community Enhancement (PLACE)

Preparation:

- Prior to hurricane season, a Plans section half-day workshop was held in the EOC to review changes to WebEOC, updated Incident Command System forms, and Plans section responsibilities.
- Mobilized staff to support plans, logistics, communications, damage assessment, and call center services for the EOC.

Operations:

- Staffed the EOC Plans section and developed Incident Action Plans, Situation Reports, and Flash Reports in addition to other documentation and record keeping for the storm event.
- Supported the EOC's Call Center to ensure all requests for assistance and all offers to provide assistance were entered into a central database for mobilization post-Idalia.
- Coordinated with City and County leadership to provide information to citizens about the availability of gas, and to communicate which businesses were open post-Idalia.

Current Status and Outlook:

- Posted information on the OEV website notifying businesses of the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program for 25 counties, including Leon, and provided links to the application. Published the same information in the OEV bi-weekly newsletter.
- Continuing to work with the FAMU SBDC and State EOC to assist with disaster recovery and to communicate the availability of disaster-related financial assistance programs to local businesses and publicizes information relative to the importance of completing the Disaster Assessment Survey for FEMA and SBA.
- Assessed active Blueprint construction projects and determined all were unscathed by Hurricane Idalia's impact.

Financial Impacts and Federal Emergency Management Assistance:

At this time, Leon County is pursuing two types of federal disaster assistance: public assistance for government/eligible non-profits and assistance for private individuals.

Public Assistance:

Due to the extent of anticipated storm-related impacts, 49 Florida counties were included in a federal disaster declaration for public assistance prior to landfall. This declaration provides cost reimbursement for eligible emergency protective measures for the first 30 days of the storm event. At minimum, 75% is covered by the federal government and 12.5% is covered by the State. To be reimbursed for any other storm-related expenses (e.g., debris, utility infrastructure restoration, permanent road work and/or culvert repair, etc.), Leon County must meet a minimum aggregate dollar threshold of \$1.3 million, including all eligible entities within the County. Leon County and other eligible entities within Leon County met with FEMA and FDEM representatives on September 6, 2023 to provide preliminary damage assessment cost reports. At the time of this

writing, the County is awaiting a determination by FEMA for any other financial assistance other than emergency protective measures (pre-storm).

Detailed storm-related costs associated with emergency protective measures are currently being compiled. Due to the extensive damage associated with Hurricane Hermine in 2016, and to ensure the maximum reimbursement possible was received from FEMA for storm-related damage, the County contracted with a Disaster Management Consultant to assist with the application and reimbursement process. Since initially using a Disaster Management Consultant for Hurricane Hermine, a consultant has been used to assist the County with the FEMA project development and reimbursement process for hurricanes Irma and Michael, and during the federally declared COVID-19 disaster. Based on the scope of the emergency preparedness efforts, the County's emergency management consultant has been engaged under the existing contract.

In response to the after-effects of Tropical Storm Fay in 2008, the Board approved the creation of the Catastrophe Reserve Fund. The fund was created to ensure access to emergency funds needed in case of a declared local state of emergency. The fund allows cash flow for expenses related to the disaster. When final damage estimates are calculated, the Catastrophe Reserve budget can be adjusted during the normal year-end budget adjustment process.

Individual Assistance

In order for FEMA to provide disaster-related assistance to individual property owners, a separate "Individual Assistance" federal disaster declaration is required. Leon County is scheduled to begin preliminary damage assessments for individual assistance on Friday, September 8. To ensure that all properties damaged by Idalia in Leon County were identified, 6 joint County-City damage assessment teams were sent into the field over the course of one day immediately following the storm. These teams identified 26 homes in Leon County impacted by the storm, 17 of which incurred only minor damage. Only 4 were categorized with major damage. Due to the limited damage to individual properties within the County, it is unlikely that Leon County will be determined eligible for individual assistance; however, a final determination has not been made.

Local State of Emergency:

On Sunday, August 27th the Chairman executed a declaration of a Local State of Emergency in Leon County in anticipation of storm-related impacts from Hurricane Idalia. This authority is provided in Section 2-306 of the Leon County Code of Ordinances as well as Leon County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, and is pursuant to Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, which authorizes the waiver of procedures and formalities otherwise required of political subdivisions to take whatever prudent action is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the community in the event of an emergency. The Local State of Emergency declaration took effect on Sunday, August 27th and was rescinded on Thursday, August 31, 2023.

Options:

1. Accept the status report on Leon County's preparation, response, and recovery efforts related to Hurricane Idalia.
2. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1