



July 25th, 2019

Update: Portage County Declares Disaster

Good Morning,

There have been many questions surrounding the recent storm events that Portage County experienced, which caused an incredible amount of damage across the county. The county's response began on July 19th to the first "derecho" storm event, and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated on July 20th. The following morning, a second "derecho" passed through the region causing even more damage that resulted in extended—and ongoing—power outages across the county.

The county has already filed the appropriate initial paperwork—a Uniform Disaster Situation Report (UDSR)—with Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM). This action put the county's foot in the door for State assistance and gave municipal and county entities the time they needed to respond to the event, begin recovery efforts, and continue to assess the overall damages.

As municipal and county personnel worked through the initial recovery effort, the county maintained near-constant communication with WEM and provided updates to public officials at the local and state levels. Now that the initial response phase is coming to an end, the county has a better sense of the overall damage and our cost estimates at this time push us past WEM's threshold for receiving aid.

We will update our paperwork with WEM with these estimates and continue to update those numbers as they come in from various departments and the work that needs to take place is completed. Municipalities—towns, villages, and the city—each have their own response to work through, and the county Emergency Management Division will continue to help those entities who request assistance.

This has been a very difficult past few days to work through, and I'd like to commend everyone who has been involved in the overall effort. There have been countless examples of neighbors helping neighbors, and the public and private sectors really came together to work through things as quickly and safely as possible. The recovery is ongoing, and there are still some areas of the county without power. Thankfully, all county roads are clear as of yesterday, and as utility crews complete their work in other parts of the region they are arriving here and working around the clock in those areas that still need their assistance. We will continue to provide updates as necessary and respond to requests for assistance as they come in.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Holman".

Chris Holman
Portage County Executive