



STATUS UPDATE

November 3, 2018

Restoration of Power

Power has now been restored to all homes in Mexico Beach where it is safe to do so. Many experts predicted it would take many months to restore power, water and sewer. We are so grateful for the endless hours by power and utility crews from across the country to get us up and running.

As Duke Energy began to restore power, city inspectors (through EPCI) marked homes green or red to indicate whether power could be safely turned on or not. **Green means** the home has been inspected and can safely receive power. **Red means** we either could not tell if it was safe because the homeowner wasn't there and it was in area that received a lot of water, or it was inspected and found that the home needed an electrician to do work to make the electrical system safe.

It is not safe to receive electrical service until your home has been inspected. Damage to your home's electrical system can result in fire if not repaired properly.

Duke is now going back to check all meters they installed. The City has advised that if they find power on a meter marked red, it should be removed until the home has been inspected. If there wasn't a main breaker outside the home and accessible to the crews, we had to pull the meter. After the destruction of Hurricane Michael, the last thing we need is to have houses catch fire.

If you have a red dot on your meter, you need to have it inspected and you may need an electrician to repair wiring or systems. Any home where salt water reached the electrical outlets should have an electrician check all electrical systems to make sure it is safe. This is a frequent cause of fire after flooding. We know it is inconvenient but we must ensure public safety. We are working as quickly as possible to perform inspections after homeowners contact us, so let's move from red to green safely!

Debris Removal

The City of Mexico Beach has been working hard to clean up. So far, we have removed 230,000 cubic yards of debris, which is about 20,000 dump trucks full. They have completed two full passes of the city and are beginning a third.

Owners can help expedite debris removal by placing debris on the right-of-ways where the City can collect it. Please do not put storm related debris in black trash bags. If bagging, place storm debris in clear bags. This helps with FEMA eligibility.

So far, it has cost approximately \$5 million to remove debris and we still have a long way to go. We are working with state and federal partners on cost sharing for this.

Private property debris removal: The City of Mexico Beach has submitted a request to FEMA to help pay for private property debris removal and are awaiting final approval. If approved, once the City completes debris collection on right of ways, public land, and waterways, we will begin offering to collect large debris on private property. The owner will be required to complete a right of entry waiver before the debris contractor can begin. Very soon we will have the waiver form available at City Hall and on the City's website for out-of-town owners. Stay tuned for that announcement on Facebook and the website. We are also working to identify and schedule volunteer organizations with experience in private property debris removal who may be able to assist.

White Goods: The City is collecting white goods (appliances, etc.) which will be stored at Pier Road until they are decommissioned. Once decommissioned that debris will be moved out of the City.

Boats and Cars: We are working to have a location permitted for housing automobiles and boats until the owners can come and claim them. The police department will be tracking the vehicles and vessels in order to quickly help owners with recovery. Any vehicles/vessels not claimed will be moved out of the City.

Household Garbage Pickup: The City of Mexico Beach has resumed garbage pickup. Household garbage cans placed by the street and dumpsters are collected daily Monday through Friday. Be sure your can is by the street in order to be collected.

Checking Homes for Habitability

City building inspectors have been assessing the habitability of all structures, which is the first step in assessing damage. The inspector will place a green, yellow, or red sticker on your front door. Green means the structure is habitable, yellow means the structure may be habitable but the inspector cannot completely determine, and red means the structure is not habitable.

On Monday, November 5th, the City will begin the process of Substantial Damage Estimation which is simply the estimate of damage to the structure and is required of every home in the community as part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The team has projected they will complete about 150 home assessments per day. If your home's damage is more than 50% of the market value as of the Jan 1, 2018 (less land value) then you will be required to bring your home up to the current code in our land development regulations. Homeowners can appeal the Substantial Damage Estimate and we will work with the owner as necessary. Our goal is to get you back in your homes and to help you navigate this process while protecting the community from future risk.

Beginning Monday, November 5th, certain additional repair contractor types will be allowed in the City to begin minor repair work. Repairs and maintenance are permitted to protect the integrity of the structure and prevent further damage. At this time, the following categories of contractors and professionals are allowed entry into Mexico Beach when they have authorization from the homeowner to do remediation or repair work: Structural engineers and related professionals, Electricians, Roofers, and Plumbers.

All contractors should be registered with the City of Mexico Beach and licensed in the state of Florida. Unlicensed contractors are always an issue in the aftermath of disasters. Report unlicensed contractors at 1.866.532.1440. Contractors must have professional credentials and a contract or work order authorized by the owner they are working for in order to gain access at the checkpoint.

As for new construction or reconstruction, the City will have to place a moratorium on new construction or reconstruction until we can determine new base flood elevations and any strengthening of wind load code to mitigate damage for the future. We are working quickly to determine necessary changes so owners and businesses can begin rebuilding as soon as possible, but appreciate your patience as we recover from this catastrophic event.

Canal, Beaches and Shores

The Mexico Beach shoreline and dune system sustained significant erosion from Hurricane Michael due to the overwhelming storm surge and wave action. The Mexico Beach CDC, under the Bay County TDC umbrella, is immediately pursuing state funding to cost-share on the preliminary tasks necessary for a beach nourishment project. These tasks include re-surveying the entire shoreline, an offshore sand source investigation, and finally design and permitting. The ultimate goal is construction of a beach nourishment project including re-establishment of the dunes along the Mexico Beach shoreline.

As the demands of massive debris removal on land ease, we will be turning attention to debris removal in and around the canal. The equipment needed to begin that work is currently unavailable. As soon as we can acquire the equipment we will begin that work by opening up the main canal and will work backwards into the City.

Drinking Water

A Boil Water notice is in effect until further notice. The water plant and chlorination station are 100% operational. The City has now tested water quality twice and if the last test is clear, we hope to be able to lift the boil water notice very soon.

The Mexico Beach water tower suffered a fatal blow during the storm. It will soon be picked up by a scrap steel vendor. We are hoping to be able to save the City logo from the tower and place it in a prominent area at a later date.

About 45% of residences are still without water/sewer and those properties are on the west end of town. The destruction was significant and we are working diligently to restore service as soon as possible. All water/sewer service has been restored from 22nd Street east to the County line.

City Budget

Hurricane Michael was a significant event in Mexico Beach history. In the short term, we have lost a substantial part of our tax base. In the long term, we have the potential to rebuild stronger by utilizing state and federal grant funding, rebuilding our businesses quickly and ensuring that Mexico Beach retains the small-town appeal that has attracted generations of families for more than 60 years.

We are already applying for grants and other funding to help us remain fiscally healthy as we rebuild. We will be looking at funding for parks and recreation, public buildings, beach renourishment and other critical areas for our city to thrive. The City has reserve funds and we are working through the fiscal year budget to eliminate costs not essential to recovery.

Most of the costs of disaster recovery will be funded by Federal and State programs, and in some cases, the city will need to come up with a percentage match. The majority of the City's cost share will be offset by grants, volunteer time, and other donations. You can help us by asking volunteers to check-in and check-out with our Volunteer Coordinator so we can use the value of the volunteer hours to count towards our match.

We have already been the recipient of many generous donations. Thanks to the Florida Rural Water Association, who is providing the City with significant water and sewer personnel and has contributed \$100,000 to help us pay for supplies. Duke Energy has contributed \$20,000. Verizon Wireless has provided City Hall with a lifeline by providing us office phones and service since the hurricane hit. Lowes has contributed many supplies needed by our Public Works Department and will be sending more. The City of Delray Beach contributed a plotter to help us print needed maps and information to help us in our recovery. The Florida Sheriffs Association and other law enforcement have contributed equipment and supplies to help us. We are grateful for these contributions and will need much more help in the weeks and months ahead.

Checkpoints

Thank you for your patience as we have implemented the checkpoints. Our first priority during this time is keeping you and your property and that of our workers safe. The more people in our area, the greater the potential for mischief. At this point, we are planning for the checkpoints to remain in place at least through November 11. We have been slowly opening up the checkpoints to various needed contractors, while trying to keep the streets open for work crews to help us recover.