FEMA Region V Open Source Summary (OSS) 7/31/2020

Regional Weather

'Quasi-Stationary' Weather System Expected to Dump Rain on Central Indiana Through Weekend
(*IndyStar*)
Indiana: After a day of intermittent storms on Thursday, the National Weather Service in Indianapolis says this new frontal system will "become quasi-stationary" as it dumps intermittent rain on the area Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There could be some lightning and flooding, but this system is not expected to bring tornadoes or other severe weather. The heaviest rainfall is expected on Saturday, with areas to the south of Indianapolis expected to see the most rain.

As Lake Michigan Waters Rise, Erosion Poses an Existential Threat to North Shore Towns and Homeowners
(*Chicago Tribune*)
Illinois: Long before the first man-made beaches in Winnetka made their debut in the mid-19th century, those hoping to take a stroll along Lake Michigan were limited to rambling along a slim ribbon of sand that took its cues from Mother Nature. After suburban communities like Lake Forest, Winnetka and Evanston were established in the mid-19th century, the North Shore became a haven for summer visitors. The growth prompted the construction of concrete groins and seawalls built to protect the eroding bluffs, and wooden piers were erected and used for public sunbathing, swimming and boating. But the North Shore's engineered shoreline and man-made beaches have proved to be no match for Lake Michigan. More than a century later, record-breaking Lake Michigan water levels and accelerating erosion coupled with increasingly volatile weather threatens to permanently alter the shoreline. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Michigan-Huron — for measurement purposes the two lakes are considered one as they connect at the Straits of Mackinac — has broken high water level marks every month of 2020. The trend is expected to continue at least until September. As the water levels continue to rise, shoreline erosion also is increasing, battering area beaches and bluffs. The torrential rainfall and brutal storms in recent years have forced scientists to reconfigure their metrics that define so-called 100-year-floods.

Warm Lake Waters Signal Coming Algal Blooms
(*WPR*)
Wisconsin: Surface water temperatures on the Great Lakes have been warmer than average this year, prompting researchers to ask the public to be on the lookout for harmful algal blooms on Lake Superior. Scientists saw a spike in surface water temperatures earlier this month due to a warm summer and a milder winter on the Great Lakes. Lake Michigan's average water temperature was roughly 75 degrees — nearly 11 degrees above normal and a record so early in the month. Blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, can produce toxins that might make people or animals sick. The first blue-green algae bloom on Lake Superior was reported in 2012 following storms that caused massive flooding in the region. Another large bloom formed in 2018 that spanned roughly 50 miles from east of Superior to the Apostle Islands on the lake's south shore. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources did receive a report of blue-green algae at the marina in Cornucopia. Water monitoring along the lakeshore is expected to run through October although July and August are considered peak bloom season.

Food, Water and Sheltering

Barron County Reports COVID-19 Outbreak at Food Processing Plant; 150 New Cases in Last 2 Weeks
(*Appleton Post-Crescent*)
Wisconsin: Barron County health officials are reporting a spike in COVID-19 cases, including an outbreak at a food processing plant. The Barron County Health Department said Wednesday in a Facebook post that it is working with Seneca Foods in Cumberland to respond to a "cluster" of positive COVID-19 cases. Seneca Foods is a fruit and vegetable processing plant. Health officials did not specify how many cases were tied to the plant, but reported 73 new positive cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday.

Chicago Food Pantries Anticipate More Need as Supplemental Unemployment Benefits End
(*Chicago Tribune*)
Chicago, Illinois: With a federal supplement to unemployment benefits expiring and no guarantee of another coronavirus relief package as unemployment remains high, Chicago residents will keep needing food and local pantries are bracing for it. Most food banks affiliated with the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Northern Illinois Food Bank have remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic. But some locations were forced to close as food prices increased, older volunteers could no longer work and churches closed buildings. About 75% of food pantries are open as part of the Greater Chicago Food Depository, a network of more than 700 food programs in Cook County. The Northern Illinois Food Bank, which supplies food through about 900 programs in other Chicago-area counties, has at least 90% of its food pantries open. About 70% of its soup kitchens are open, a lower number because of social distancing guidelines.

Sewage and Flooding Woes in Centreville 'Urgent' as Senators Call on EPA to Help
(*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*)
East St Louis, Illinois: Illinois' two U.S. senators are calling on the federal government to address what they call an "urgent public health crisis" in Metro East, the persistent flooding and sewage problems that have long plagued Centreville and nearby communities. A letter sent Wednesday to Region 5 of the Environmental Protection Agency, asked the agency to enforce environmental laws, conduct water testing and identify solutions. In parts of Centreville, dirt trenches line the streets and drain runoff instead of storm drains. The trenches, however, have not been maintained. They fill with standing water and trash and overflow into yards and homes. Some streets with storm drains are quickly overwhelmed in a downpour, flooding streets and trapping residents. The city's sewer system relies on nearly 30 above-ground pumps to move wastewater through the lines. Most are broken, however, overtaken by stormwater or overwhelmed by clogged lines. With nowhere to go, wastewater bubbles out of manholes and into the streets, mixing with standing stormwater. Residents are left with rotting floors, mold-covered walls and windowsills, crumbling streets and a stomach-churning smell. Many rely on donated bottled water because they are fearful the water system is contaminated. The stormwater and sewer systems are maintained by Centreville as well as the Commonfields of Cahokia utility. Sewer lines also are connected to East St. Louis' systems. Officials with the state EPA did not respond Thursday to a request for comment.

Health and Medical

Mandatory Masks in Wisconsin Goes into Effect Saturday
(*NBC15 WMTV*)
Wisconsin: Masks will soon be required across the entire state of Wisconsin. On Thursday, Gov. Tony Evers declared a Public Health Emergency and issued an Emergency Order mandating the wearing of face coverings when someone is indoors, except when they are in a private residence. The order goes into effect on Saturday, Aug. 1 and is set to end on Monday, Sept. 28, 2020. It requires everyone five and older to wear a face covering when they are in an enclosed space outside of their household or living unit. It contains exceptions for people with health conditions or disabilities that would prevent someone from wearing a mask. It also carves exceptions for eating, drinking and swimming.

Why Do We Have Different Blood Types — and Do They Make Us More Vulnerable to Covid-19?
(*CNN*)
Nation: Most humans fall into one of four blood groups — A, B, AB or O. Ordinarily, your blood type makes very little difference in your daily life except if you need to have a blood transfusion. However, some studies have people wondering if blood type affects coronavirus risk. One, for instance, suggests that people with Type A may have a higher risk of catching Covid-19 and of developing severe symptoms while people with Type O blood may have a lower risk. A study published this week counters some these early findings, a reminder that scientific discovery is an evolving process. Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital and Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital published a study Thursday that found no evidence that blood type affects whether someone develops severe symptoms (defined as intubation or death) from a coronavirus infection. Other past research indicates that certain blood groups may affect vulnerability to other diseases, including cancer.

Communications/Information Technology

Volunteer Hacker Army Boosts U.S. Election Cybersecurity
(*NBC News*)
Chicago, Illinois: As election officials across the country prepare for November without knowing if they'll receive additional federal funds, a new volunteer group hopes to ease their cybersecurity concerns for free. Some states pay private companies for cybersecurity, while others rely on in-house staff or federal assistance. But nearly all have had to drastically rearrange their budgets this year to focus on holding an election during a pandemic, such as covering an influx of mailed ballots and buying cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment. Now, a University of Chicago initiative called the Election Cyber Surge aims to act as matchmaker between local election officials who may not have access to cybersecurity services and qualified experts who want to help. Officials will be able to choose an area of concern, then pick from a list of professionals willing to help via phone or video chat, a necessity during the pandemic. The program will begin with about 50 vetted volunteers, she said, with that number likely to double. Most were identified through a university database of trusted cybersecurity professionals and have at least a decade of experience in the field.

Transportation

CN Invests $520 Million in Its US Assets
(*Yahoo Finance*)
Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin: Canadian National Railway Company (CN) expects to spend roughly a half-billion dollars on infrastructure improvements across its U.S. network. So far, CN

has announced approximately $520 million in capital expenditures across eight states. For Region V, Illinois is scheduled to receive $165 million, Michigan, $55 million, Minnesota, $25 million, and Wisconsin, $100 million.

Other Items of National or International Interest

Isaias is Now the Season's Second Hurricane
(*CNN*)
Florida: With maximum sustained winds of 80 mph, Hurricane Isaias is moving northwest from about 45 miles southeast of Great Inagua Island, according to the National Hurricane Center (NHC). Central and southeastern Bahamas are under a Hurricane Warning, while the east coast of Florida including Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach have a Tropical Storm Watch in effect. Rainfall will be the main concern over the next few days. South and east-central Florida could see 2 to 4 inches with isolated totals of 6 inches, NHC said.

Tropical Storm Isaias Strengthens into Category One Hurricane, Continues to Track Towards North Carolina
(*ABC 11 WTVD*)
North Carolina: Tropical Storm Isaias has officially strengthened into a Category One Hurricane, according to the National Hurricane Center. The hurricane is still slated to track towards the U.S. East Coast along North Carolina. While that path is still a long ways out and could change drastically, at this time it does look like Isaias will at least bring rain to parts of North Carolina next week. However, the coast is already seeing effects of Isaias as a high risk rip current goes into effect starting Friday stretching from Hatteras down to the Carolina Beach. The elevated threat will go on into the weekend as the storm continues to move north. The hurricane is currently moving northwest at 18 mph with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph.

EPA Announces $4.3 Million for Tribes to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water in Schools
(*NBC12 WIFJ*)
Nation: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Thursday announced a new grant program to help protect children in tribal communities from lead in drinking water at schools and childcare facilities. Authorized by the Water Infrastructure Improvements of the Nation (WIIN) Act, EPA is making $4.3 million available to support the Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water Tribal Grant Program. Grantees will use the EPA's 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water guidance to implement lead testing programs and develop monitoring, maintenance and/or sampling plans that protect children from lead exposure now and in the future. Beneficiaries of the program must be members of a federally-recognized tribe. EPA will host a webinar in August to provide more information about the 3Ts toolkit and an overview of the grant and its scope.

Canada Tightens Border Rules for Travelers Headed to Alaska
(*REUTERS*)
Canada: Canada is tightening its rules for foreign travelers who must transit through the country to get to Alaska, the government said on Thursday, after several U.S. citizens were fined by police for making detours to sightsee. The Canada-U.S. border has been closed to non-essential travel since mid-March, but returning Canadians, essential workers, truck drivers, foreigners reunifying with family, and people driving to Alaska have been allowed in. Canada has significantly slowed the spread of the coronavirus

compared to the United States, where on Wednesday the country's three biggest states all set one-day records for fatalities from COVID-19. Deaths in all of Canada have been in the single digits several times in the past two weeks. Everyone entering Canada except essential workers currently must quarantine for 14 days, but not all have complied. Under the new rules, which will take effect on Friday, travelers heading to Alaska for non-discretionary purposes must enter the country at one of five specified border crossings here in Western Canada.