



Office of Emergency Management

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Kalamazoo River Oil Spill Update

For Immediate Release: July 28, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.

The Kalamazoo County Office of Emergency Management continues to coordinate local oil spill response efforts through its Emergency Operations Center and according to OEM Director Lt. Paul Baker, significantly more resources have been put into place today to help with the containment effort.

“Our goal 24 hours ago was to achieve containment east of Morrow Dam, and it appears at this time that we are making great strides towards that goal,” said Kalamazoo County Undersheriff Paul Matyas upon returning from a tour of the affected area with local public officials including City of Kalamazoo Mayor Hopewell, and Kalamazoo County Board Chair Buskirk. “At this time, we are planning to set up additional booms beyond Morrow Lake as a secondary line of defense.”

“We continue to work closely with local, state and federal officials, including the Coast Guard, in a team effort between Kalamazoo and Calhoun Counties,” said Kalamazoo County Sheriff Richard Fuller. “Further, we are working closely with Embridge and are pleased with their response and cooperation.”

On July 26, 2010, a pipeline on Embridge Energy’s Lakehead system leaked near a pump station in Marshall, Michigan spilling roughly 877,000 gallons (according to estimates from Embridge) of crude oil into Talmage Creek, which flows directly into the Kalamazoo River.

According to the Department of National Resources, over 45,000 feet of boom have been placed in the Kalamazoo River in an effort to contain the spill. Specifically, in the Augusta/Galesburg

area, reports are that the booms are being very effective in capturing the spill. It appears that, thus far, minimal spillage has made its way through Morrow Dam.

Water testing is occurring up and down the river in Kalamazoo and Allegan Counties. Due to recent rains, water levels in the Kalamazoo River are making containment efforts more challenging.

Local health officials continue to monitor the situation and warn citizens to avoid all contact with water from the Kalamazoo River east of Morrow Dam until further notice. All surface water activities, including swimming, wading, fishing, and boating / canoeing / kayaking, and agricultural use should cease. Additionally, due to the fumes associated with a crude oil spill, people are warned to avoid time in the immediate area around the river and avoid contact if at all possible. This order will remain in effect until further investigation indicates that risk has been minimized. For more information, visit the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department's website at www.kalcounty.com/hcs.

Citizens are also encouraged to not attempt to 'rescue' any animals in distress. They could be putting themselves and/or the animals at risk in this stressful situation. Citizens are encouraged to keep their distance from the distressed animal and contact 1.800.306.6837 and assistance will be arranged.

While offers of assistance from the public are appreciated, at this time the focus is on containment and volunteers are not being sought. When appropriate, opportunities to volunteer will be made available and announced through official channels.

After hours media calls should be directed to Emergency Management Director Lt. Paul Baker at 269-744-6934.

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