FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2015

Day Seven: Team Rubicon in Full Force; Tree Debris Overcomes Roadways

Grand Traverse County – The aftermath of last Sunday’s ravaging wind and rainstorm continues. According to County Emergency Management Coordinator Gregg Bird, yesterday’s request from Grand Traverse County Chair Christine Maxbauer for Governor Snyder to declare a state of emergency within the county is “under consideration.” However, said Bird, with each day that passes, the tree debris being dumped into roadways and streets is creating unsafe driving conditions.

To alleviate and help avoid further unsafe conditions, Bird strongly encourages county residents to use one of two drop-off sites established for storm tree debris. With the exception of the City of Traverse City, which has scheduled a curbside pickup for residents, the County Road Commission is asking residents to refrain from piling debris in the public right-of-way, because it is overburdening crews and causing safety issues. Bird said he is working on identifying supplemental options for county residents, in addition to the two debris drop-off sites.

Whitewater Township Supervisor Ron Popp announced the opening of one site at 7304 Skegemog Point Road, the Ashmore Gravel Pit. As of today, until further notice, the site will be open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Another site opened yesterday at the former East Bay Township Recycling property, 656 Rasho Road. Hours there also are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and the site will remain open until further notice.

Bird cited $18 million in damaged properties throughout the county, based on preliminary assessments by the County Assessor’s Office, whose staff worked tirelessly this week to evaluate hundreds of affected properties. “Damages have created an overwhelming amount of tree debris that has to be managed,” Bird explained. The City’s Department of Public Services and the County Road Commission are seeking outside assistance from contractors to help bolster street and road cleanup efforts.

Team Rubicon, a national disaster response team of military veterans requested by county and city officials, arrived yesterday to help residents without sufficient insurance or the means to clean up their private properties.

Emergency management staff from Otsego and Emmett-Charlevoix-Cheboygan counties also are assisting the county’s emergency management coordinator with communications, debris management, and more.

“I am so pleased that an organization such as Team Rubicon is able to offer its resources when our community is in such a time of need,” said Bird. He also expressed appreciation for the support from neighboring emergency management staff. “Knowing I am a one-man department, they made arrangements to immediately come here to help our community and help me, all without putting their own communities in jeopardy.”

Contact: Kris Erickson, Grand Traverse County Media Contact; 231-922-4511; kerickson@grandtraverse.org.
Today, Rubicon team members are visiting residential areas to make assessments and identify who needs help. (Some pictures of Team Rubicon members and a flyer are included with this release so that community members can recognize them.)

Team Rubicon brings with it many resources: manpower, a storm cleanup “hotline,” and broad community communications outreach. Rubicon already has established a “one-stop-shopping” phone, has established a community Facebook page, and is distributing informational flyers to county residents.

Call 616-841-5399 to seek assistance, to volunteer time and/or equipment, and to hear the most up-to-date list of storm tree debris drop-off sites.

Visit the “Grand Traverse Strong” Facebook page, which also is devoted to post-storm updates, resources, and community engagement.

Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation has provided a facility to house Team Rubicon and emergency manager volunteers; Salvation Army is providing meals and bedding.

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Team Rubicon is in your community to provide **FREE** storm cleanup assistance and spontaneous volunteer management. TR has been approved by the County Emergency Manager and Traverse City for these tasks.

**Team Rubicon** (TR) unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams. TR is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization! If you are interested in our Team working on your property, please contact us by phone at:

**616-841-5399**

Please leave a message if no answer!

[www.teamrubiconusa.org](http://www.teamrubiconusa.org)