

Pound officials and volunteers assess impact of flooding

POUND, Va. — As the sun came out over Wise County on Saturday, Pound residents were still cleaning up after Thursday's flash flooding.

Approximately 6 inches of rainfall fell Wednesday night into Thursday morning in some parts of Wise County, according to the National Weather Service office in Morristown.

By 8:30 a.m. Thursday, deputies and residents were reporting water as deep as 3 feet along parts of Pound's downtown Main Street. Coeburn and Wise also saw waters sweep down main roads, flooding intersections and cutting residents off from escape routes.

Fourteen residents were rescued in the Pound area and another two in the Guest River section of Norton, Wise County Emergency Services Coordinator Jessica Swiney said.

Twelve of those rescued were stranded staff members and residents from the Rachel's Haven group home in Pound. Sheriff's deputies, boat crews from the Appalachia and Coeburn fire departments and firefighters from Wise worked in a joint effort to rescue them after floodwaters from Indian Creek and the Pound River sealed all major road entrances into the town.

Leah Kennedy of the Rachel's Haven staff was

among the 12 brought from a dry patch near the IGA supermarket in Pound. She said she and staffers saw water rising around the group home at about 2 a.m. on Thursday. By 7 a.m., floodwaters had submerged the bridge between the site and Business U.S. 23 leading into town.

Kennedy said she and house staff and residents were able to cross an unflooded yard and reach the IGA, where they awaited rescue and evacuation by Mountain Empire Transit bus.

Most of the roadways began to clear by Thursday, and Saturday further helped dry the area with sunny skies and high temperatures.

"We've been lucky with the sun coming out and helping to dry out things today," Swiney said.

PUBLIC EMERGENCY

Wise County officials declared a local state of emergency at 7 a.m. Thursday. The local declaration was followed by another on Thursday from Virginia Gov. Glenn

Youngkin, allowing up to \$1 million in state aid — half of that for state military efforts — for the affected areas.

Youngkin's declaration also allows for National Guard deployment as part of the state response.

Wise County has seen no injuries or deaths from Thursday's flash flooding, Swiney said on Friday.

"We do not anticipate requesting National Guard help at this time because of the local and state agencies that have been able to come together to respond," said Swiney.

On Saturday, Swiney said a clearer picture had emerged about the flooding's impact. About 10

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An Appalachia Fire and Rescue boat team brings residents of a Pound group home to safety after flash flooding struck parts of Wise County on Thursday.

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