

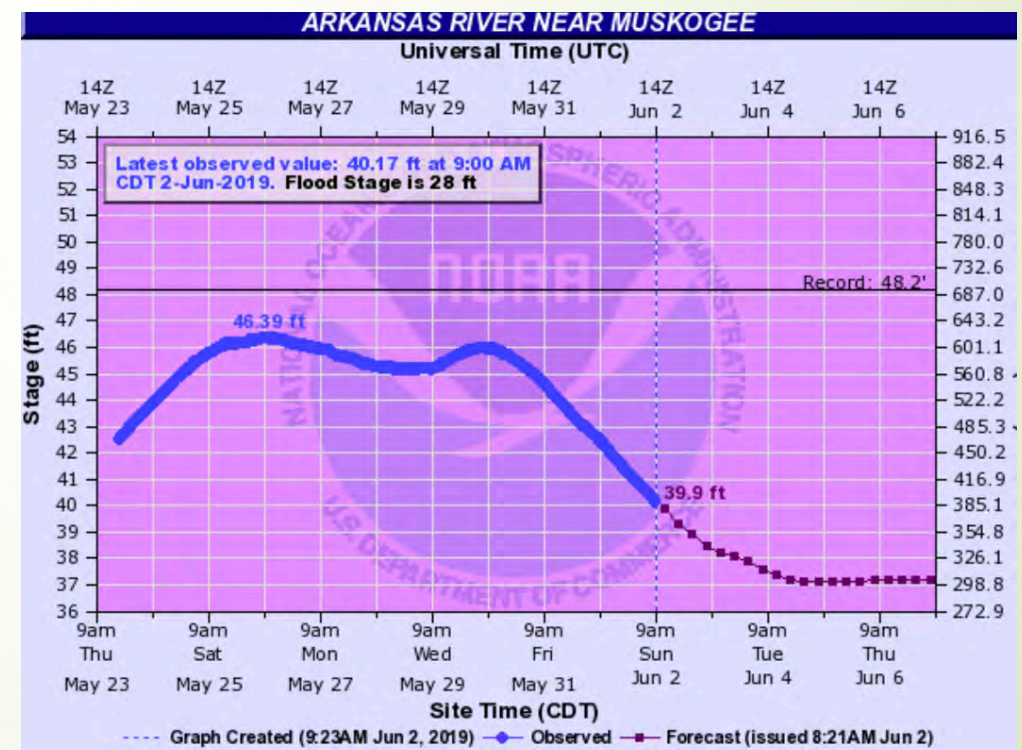
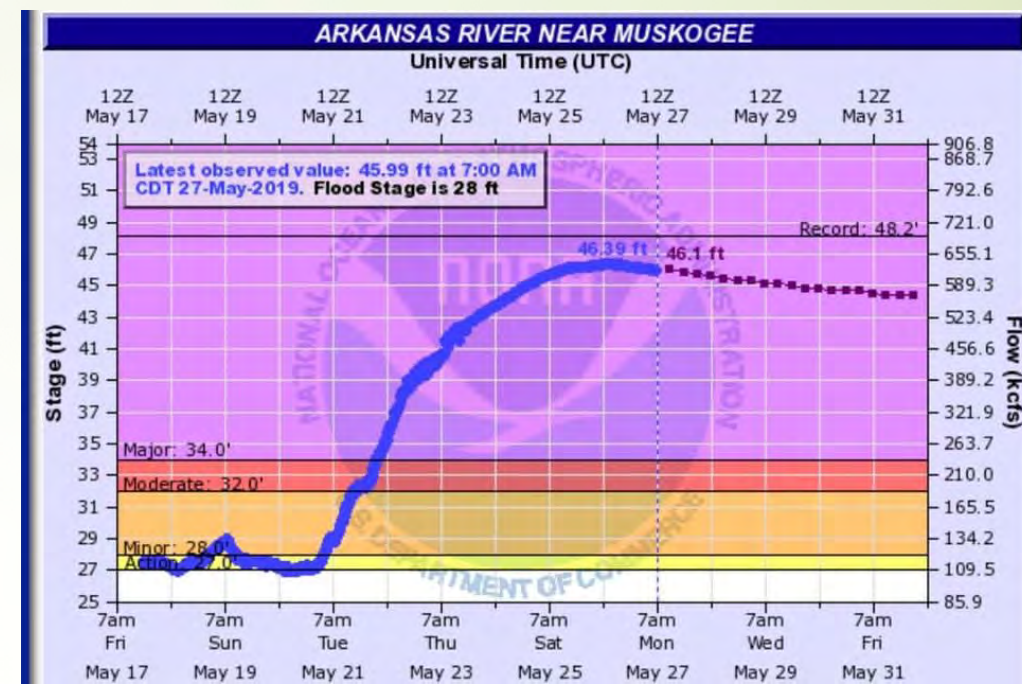


# The Record Flood of 2019

**Ken Doke, Commissioner**  
Muskogee County

# CATASTROPHIC FLOODING

- Beginning May 21<sup>st</sup>, the AR River near Muskogee rose over 20 feet in just a few days to the highest level in recorded history
- It remained at historically high levels for nearly a week
- Major flooding continued for weeks
- River did not return to its banks for over 1.5 months



- Thousands of homes were evacuated
- Water Rescue teams checked attics
- Lost utilities and all communications to much of the town of Fort Gibson
- Evacuated homes and farms all along the river in Muskogee County



- Evacuated the entire town of Webbers Falls
- Town was a total loss by the end of the event
- Flooded all municipal buildings, school, businesses, farm crops, etc.
- Destroyed town infrastructure



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Hundreds of road closures including major state highways and bridges
- Lost access across HW 62 between Muskogee & Fort Gibson
- Establishing routes for first responders became a huge priority



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# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Communities became completely cut off
- Many bridges were shut down
- Railways were under water
- 1.5 Hour round-trip to Fort Gibson and Braggs



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Lost Electricity
- Lost Water
- Lost Sewer
- Lost Communications
- Lost Supply Lines



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Nearly lost water to the 44,000 residents of Muskogee
- Dike & Sand Bag Operation
- Water was inches from topping the Dike







# CRISIS SITUATION

- With flows of over 700,000 cfs, barges broke loose & hit the downstream dam
- USS Batfish was loosed
- Resources were maxed





# EMERGENCY RESPONSE



# Managing The Public Message

- Ease the panic
- Squash the rumors
- Dissemination of information
- Situation changed by the minute
- Social Media



# PARTNERS RESPONSE

- Muskogee County & ODOT build “impossible road”
- Power Companies Back feed each other
- Union Pacific helps establish supply line to cut off communities
- Cherokee Nation, City of Muskogee, towns, national guard, churches, police, fire, EMS, etc.



# AFTERMATH

- 833 Flooded Structures
- Nearly 500 Families Lost Everything
- Entire town of Webbers Falls devastated
- Damage to crops & homes estimated at over \$100 Million



# AFTERMATH

- Roads demolished
- Farms & Crops erased
- Bridges damaged
- Rail Lines rendered useless
- Port of Muskogee impaired
- Nav Channel impassable
- Comm Towers Damaged



Water has receded off of Hancock but still not passable due to this awesome hole. [See More](#)



# AFTERMATH

- Companies wrecked
- Sewer & Water Plants offline
- Utility infrastructure annihilated
- Never-ending debris



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Hundreds of layoffs
- Unemployment up 2%
- Housing Shortage
- Economic Impact of Impassable Nav Channel is \$2 Million / Day
- Damage could exceed \$500 Million





# GOING FORWARD

- Application for EDA Grant to build a levee system around the Muskogee Port and Industrial Park area (estimated at \$6 Million).
- Efforts to remove residents from areas prone to river flooding, or requiring home elevations to be raised to new standards.
- Leaving contingency drinking water options in place, along with; substations, backup roads, etc.





# Closing Remarks

- We were fortunate
- Zero loss of life
- It takes resources to respond to catastrophic disasters
- If Muskogee County had not had the preparedness and resources, there could have been significant loss of life
- Information was critical
- We will be better prepared next time

**Ken Doke, Commissioner  
Muskogee County**