

# MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

# NEWS



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 22, 2001**

**SUBJECT: WAYNESBORO WELL FIRE UPDATE**

(Waynesboro) – Boots and Coots, well control specialist, continues to utilize a temporary stack to vent gas away from the wellhead. The capping stack and diverter lines are assembled and on standby to proceed with capping. The crew is currently inspecting and evaluating the status of the wellhead. Boots & Coots reports that work remains on schedule and that there have been no significant delays in getting the gas release under control.

Boots and Coots and the United States Environmental Protection Agency continue to monitor the air quality and advise no toxic levels of contaminants have been detected. Boots & Coots, under the supervision of the EPA and MDEQ, are using an onsite wastewater treatment system to cleanse wastewater generated during operations.

Bean Resources Inc. continues to provide accommodations and meals for the evacuated families. Any inquiries regarding evacuation status, hotel reservations or meals should be directed to Bryant Miller, Bean Resources representative, at 601-410-0937.

The Governor's State of Emergency remains in effect to ensure that all public health and safety measures are being maintained. The mandatory 2 1/2-mile evacuation area around the well site remains in effect until emergency officials complete the necessary repairs. The FAA's no fly zone remains in effect for a three-mile radius around the well site and 3000 feet in elevation above the well site. Federal, State, and local authorities, including the United States EPA and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, remains on site monitoring the recovery operations.

Traffic control points remain in place around the evacuation area. Any persons needing to enter the evacuation area should contact security personnel located at the Ward Pitts Store on Little Rock Road. Persons needing to collect personal belongings or to care for pets or livestock will be escorted to their homes by an emergency official. Reservoir Road, which was previously closed, has reopened to through traffic.

Persons residing in the affected area can call MEMA at 1-800-441-6362 to obtain the latest advisories and recommendations of state, local, and company officials.