MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **February 19, 2001** **4:30 P.M.**
SUBJECT: WAYNESBORO WELL FIRE UPDATE

(Waynesboro) – Boots and Coots, well control specialist, has cleared out the majority of the remaining components of the damaged oilrig from the wellhead. They are preparing to cut and remove the blowout preventer from the wellhead, which will allow the capping process to proceed as scheduled.

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.

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. 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.

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