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[00:00:01] **Speaker 1** So we have for the camera, can you give us your first and last name and your title?

[00:00:05] **Speaker 2** Sure, Nicole Wilson, N-I-C-O-L-E, W-I L-S-O N, and I am a FEMA spokesperson.

[00:00:13] **Speaker 1** So tell me about the work that you're doing here in Milwaukee.

[00:00:15] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so FEMA is here at the request of the state where we've joined Wisconsin Emergency Management to come out and verify some of the damage that these communities suffered as a result of the storms that started on August 9th. And we're here with the state, the county, and we're going to take a look at some of the damaged that occurred and talk to the residents. We're knocking on doors to see what the storms, how those storms impacted families here. And the state will take the data that we collect. Over the next few days or however long it takes to collect that data. They'll take that data and provide it to the governor. And ultimately, the governor will use that information to make a determination on whether he will then make a request for a major disaster declaration for these communities.

[00:01:00] **Speaker 1** So how many assessments do you expect to make while you're here?

[00:01:05] **Speaker 2** How many actual assessments, meaning how many doors will we not?

[00:01:08] **Speaker 1** Yeah, yeah. What's the extent of your work here?

[00:01:10] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so our teams will go wherever the state and the county requests that we go. We will see as much damage as they ask us to see. We have looked at some of that damage virtually. We know that they have asked families and individuals to send photos to 211. People have done that, we've seen some of those photos. We started looking at some of those photos earlier this week. And now we're in the field looking at the damage in person. And so we're here to see exactly what the county and the state want us to see. And we're going to be here as long as they think we need to be.

[00:01:54] **Speaker 1** And then how many FEMA representatives and workers will be here for this part of it.

[00:01:59] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I don't have an exact number for you, but I know that we have six teams in the field. We have four teams in Milwaukee County, one in Ouachita County, and one in Washington County, Waukesha County. We have 14 in Milwaukee county, one Waukeesha county, and one in Washington county. I don't have an exactly number on how many FEMA staff are here. But I can tell you that dozens of people from FEMA and the counties and the cities are here supporting these assessments.

[00:02:28] **Speaker 1** So part of the push here is to get the federal designation for the emergency status and declaration. What does that process look like? Where do you all fit in, and can you roll out that process for us?

[00:02:42] **Speaker 2** Yeah, absolutely. So these assessments are basically the first step in the process. The state has requested FEMA come in to take a look at the damage and verify this damage. And this is the first step in the process toward getting a major disaster declaration. So here we are in the beginning phase of here. We're out here. We're taking a look at the damage. We will make sure the state and the county have this information. And then again, we'll roll that information up. The governor will receive this information. They'll review it. And then the governor will say, hey, yes, this is good enough for us to submit. This is above our capability to help these communities recover. And if that is the conclusion he comes to, then he will make a determination to submit a request for a major disaster declaration. That request will come to FEMA. FEMA will make the recommendation to the president. The president has the final say on whether a disaster declaration will be issued. What's the timeline for that? I don't. Unfortunately, I can't say that's a two-day timeline or a two week timeline or a two month timeline. Unfortunately that information does not.

[00:03:48] **Speaker 1** With me. So have you gone out and seen some of the damage yourself and tell me what you're seeing?

[00:03:53] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I have not seen any of them even if I have, it would be a very very small snapshot compared to what our local partners have seen and so I think questions like that would be better represented for our local and county and state partners because they've been on the ground since day one, they've seen what their neighbors have been dealing with and so they have told us what that damage looks like. And so that's why we've relied on them to bring us into the communities that they think are hardest hit. And we are following their lead, and we're here to see what they want us to see.

[00:04:30] **Speaker 1** Of folks looking for when they're in meeting with these residents? What do they want to see to take down and right now?

[00:04:40] **Speaker 2** Yeah, we want to know how the storm impacted the families, right? So were the families displaced from their homes? If the storms, if their basements were flooded, did sewage get into their homes. How did that impact their living situation? And so those are some of the questions we will ask. Did it knock out their HVAC systems? Did it not knock out your electric systems? Did it shift their foundation? Damage their homes in a way that prevented them from living in their homes. These are some of the things that we're looking for because this is what makes the home habitable or uninhabitable.

[00:05:19] **Speaker 1** The things that we're looking for. Is there anything else that I can ask about that's important?

[00:05:25] **Speaker 2** No, thank you, top of that.

[00:05:26] **Speaker 1** Thank you so much for your time.

[00:05:27] **Speaker 2** Of course.