



## Keeping Eagle Safe after Mother Nature's Wrath

(EAGLE, Alaska) – Department of Public Safety officials visited Eagle on Thursday, May 21, 2009 to address safety issues and to offer assistance while the city and Native village grapple with clean up efforts following an ice jam and severe flooding.

DPS Commissioner Joe Masters, Alaska State Troopers Director Col. Audie Holloway and Director of Fire and Life Safety Dave Tyler flew to the Yukon River town to see first hand the river's assault on the area. Their presence also was to assure residents that help is available to stem public safety concerns even before they begin.

"It's not because there's a problem, we don't want a problem to arise," Holloway told community leaders and state officials who were assisting with clean up efforts.

Masters and Holloway discussed potential problems that commonly occur following significant events such as alcohol-related crime as well as theft of rebuilding materials and pilfering of personal property.

In addition, Eagle is accessible by road and may be vulnerable to criminals coming in from outside the community.



**DPS Commissioner Joe Masters, on right, and Eagle Village Public Safety Officer Tim Beaucage stand on an ice chunk to get a better view of the damage inflicted upon Eagle by an ice jam in the Yukon River in early May.**



**Members of the Department of Public Safety meet with local and state officials at the school in Eagle. Pictured are, from left, Steese Area Volunteer Fire Department Chief Mitch Flynn, State Emergency Management Specialist George Coyle, Alaska State Trooper Kevin Yancy, Eagle Mayor Jerry Nelson, Village Public Safety Officer Tim Beaucage, AST Director Col. Audie Holloway and DPS Commissioner Joe Masters. Not pictured is State Fire Marshal Dave Tyler.**

"Disasters sometimes bring people together in good ways," said Commissioner Masters. "Unfortunately, some people will prey upon those dealing with disasters."

Increasing troopers' presence in the community to curtail criminal activity before it starts is one way DPS is supporting the community. Troopers from Tok and Fairbanks will routinely travel to Eagle to help provide support for Village Public Safety Officer Tim Beaucage who has been working tirelessly since the water and ice chunks jumped the banks of the Yukon River in early May.

State Fire Marshal Tyler assessed the flood's damage to the city's infrastructure and its ability to respond to other emergencies. One of the fire department's tenders was inoperable after 8 feet of water flooded the fire station. The department's Code Red Unit, designed for fighting early stage structure fires, was completely submerged and needs repairs. Tyler was accompanied by Steese Area Volunteer Fire Chief Mitch Flynn, whose department is sending a 2,500 gallon tender to help with fire suppression efforts.

Large chunks of ice remain on land on the banks of the Yukon River. The encroaching ice is clogging the streets and deterring people from retrieving items from crushed homes and buildings. Red and yellow caution tape cordoned off the front part of town, warning people to stay away from the rotten ice as it slowly melts in the warm Interior weather.