

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: **DAMAGED COUNTIES ADDED TO DISASTER DECLARATION**

JACKSON, MS – The number of Mississippi counties declared major disaster areas following severe February storms rose from three to nine today with the addition of six counties hit by tornadoes on Saturday night Feb. 24.

Under the amended presidential declaration, the following counties are now eligible for individual and public assistance from the federal and state governments: Attala, Choctaw, Clay, Noxubee, Winston, Yazoo, Holmes, Lowndes, and Okitbbeh.

The contiguous counties of Alcorn, Attala, Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Coahoma, Grenada, Humphreys, Itawamba, Lafayette, Madison, Monroe, Noxubee, Panola, Quitman, Sunflower, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Washington, Webster, Winston, Yalobusha, and Yazoo are also eligible for individual assistance.

Federal and state public assistance will be available to affected local governments to pay 75 percent of the approved cost for repairing or replacing damaged public facilities in the counties of Attala, Choctaw, Clay, Noxubee, Winston, and Yazoo.

At the request of Gov. Ronnie Musgrove these counties have been included in the major disaster declaration signed by President Bush following the severe storms of Feb. 16 that damaged homes and businesses in Holmes, Oktibbeha and Lowndes counties.

"Both FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh and President Bush pledged their support to Mississippians during my conversation with them on Monday in Washington," said Gov. Musgrove. "We appreciate their quick follow through and federal assistance that will help us quickly respond to the needs of our citizens in getting the help they need to rebuild their lives, homes, and communities."

John Hannah of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the official responsible for coordinating federal disaster assistance programs with the state, said residents of the new counties will be eligible for the full range of state and federal disaster assistance.

"MEMA is urging all citizens who suffered property damage or loss to apply for disaster assistance by call FEMA's toll-free line, **1-800-462-9029**. (The number is **1-800-462-7585** for those with hearing or speech impediments)," said Director Robert Latham. " With state and federal assistance already in place, we are able to respond quickly to provide needed assistance to the latest storm victims."

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