



NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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 eight Sunday with the addition of five counties hit by tornado-like winds Saturday night Feb. 24.

Eight persons were listed as fatally injured in the most recent outbreak of violent weather that hit Leflore, Tallahatchie, Lee, Pontotoc and Prentiss counties during a late-night rainstorm. In addition to deaths and injuries, property damage was extensive in the area.

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.

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.

Hannah and Leon Shaifer of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) said citizens who suffered uninsured property damage or loss should apply for disaster assistance by calling FEMA's toll-free line, **1-800-462-9029**. (The number is **1-800-462-7585** for those with hearing or speech impediments).

"With state and federal assistance already rolling to help those who were hit on the 16th, we hope to be able to respond quickly to provide needed assistance to the newest victims of nature's wrath," said Shaifer.

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