



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY -- FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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14 COUNTIES DESIGNATED FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

JACKSON, Miss. December 20, 2001 – Disaster assistance for Benton, Bolivar Coahoma, Humphreys, Leake, Marshall, Panola, Prentiss, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tippah, Tunica and Washington has been expanded to include aid for local governments affected by the recent tornadoes, flooding and severe storms in Mississippi, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today.

FEMA Director Joe M. Allbaugh said the additional assistance was approved following a review of damage data gathered by federal, state and local disaster recovery officials. Mississippi was declared a disaster area by President Bush on December 7.

“Our continuing commitment is not only to help the recovery needs of devastated families and businesses,” Allbaugh said, “but to ensure that the vital community services they depend on are restored as quickly and efficiently as possible. Ensuring that vital community services are restored as quickly as possible is part of that commitment to help Mississippi achieve a full and lasting recovery.”

“I appreciate FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh’s quick response to our request to add additional counties,” said Governor Musgrove. “This addition to the federal disaster declaration means that FEMA’s resources will be available to the state to help the citizens affected by the severe weather, tornadoes and the recent flooding recover as quickly as possible.”

Under the expanded assistance, Allbaugh said the affected local governments are eligible to apply for federal funds to pay 75 percent of the approved cost for debris removal, emergency services related to the disaster, and repairing or replacing damaged public facilities, such as roads, buildings and utilities.

Procedures for requesting the assistance will be explained at a series of applicant briefings at locations to be announced shortly by state and federal disaster officials.

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