



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY -- FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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QUESTIONS ABOUT DISASTER ASSISTANCE? TOLL-FREE HELPLINE AVAILABLE

JACKSON, Miss. January 16, 2002 – A Disaster Information Helpline is in operation for those who were affected by the recent severe storms, tornadoes and flooding and who already have applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for disaster assistance.

The Helpline number for assistance is **1-800-621-3362**, or **1-800-462-7585** for the hearing or speech impaired. The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday, and 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Leon Shaifer, the state coordinating officer for disaster recovery, said, “We realize many people may have questions about FEMA’s disaster assistance program now that they have registered, so a toll-free Helpline is available to answer their questions.”

The Helpline is available to answer questions about what disaster assistance programs are available, to inquire about the status of an existing application for assistance, or to maintain up-to-date application information such as changes of addresses and phone numbers.

Gracia Szczech, the federal official in charge of recovery, added, “If you have not yet registered for assistance with FEMA, you also can get the process started by calling the same number. The deadline to apply for assistance is February 5, less than three weeks away. Call **1-800-621-3362** today.”

The 17 Mississippi counties eligible for individual disaster assistance are: Bolivar, Coahoma, DeSoto, Grenada, Hinds, Humphreys, Lafayette, Leake, Madison, Panola, Quitman, Scott, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica and Washington.

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