



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY -- FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISASTER ASSISTANCE SURPASSES \$7.6 MILLION; DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE IS FEBRUARY 5TH

JACKSON, Miss. January 28, 2002 – The deadline to apply for federal and state disaster assistance is only days away. February 5th is the last day residents and business owners who sustained damage during the November 24 through December 17, 2001, severe storms, tornadoes and flooding can apply for assistance.

On December 7, 2001, President Bush declared several Mississippi counties eligible for federal assistance. Since that time, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) have helped more than 1850 Mississippians receive disaster assistance amounting to more than \$7.6 million.

Initially, 10 Mississippi counties were declared eligible for individual disaster assistance and since that time, 13 additional counties have been added either for individual assistance, public assistance (infrastructure), or both.

Counties eligible for individual disaster assistance and their respective number of applications received so far are: Bolivar, 152; Coahoma, 52; DeSoto, 144; Grenada, 6; Hinds, 5; Humphreys, 206; Lafayette, 16; Leake, 9; Madison, 112; Panola, 196; Quitman, 408; Scott, 3; Sunflower, 122; Tallahatchie, 119; Tate, 27, Tunica, 50 and Washington, 228. Residents and business owners located in those counties have applied for and have received a total of \$7,676,773 in disaster aid.

The counties eligible for public infrastructure disaster assistance are: Benton, Bolivar, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Leake, Marshall, Panola, Prentiss, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate,

Tippah, Tunica and Washington. MEMA, the state agency charged with long-term disaster recovery, conducted five program briefings for area community officials to explain the process of applying for federal disaster assistance. That assistance can come in the form of debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, restoration or replacement of public facilities damaged as a result of the severe weather.

Gracia Szczech, the federal official in charge of disaster recovery, and Leon Shaifer, the state official in charge of disaster recovery, have jointly stated, "The deadline to apply for federal and state disaster assistance is just a few days away. February 5th is the last day to apply for assistance if you have damage to real or personal property resulting from the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding of November 24 through December 17, 2001. Residents and business owners may be eligible for assistance and not realize it. Don't automatically disqualify yourself, call FEMA's Hotline, **1-800-621-3362** (**1-800-462-7585** for the hearing or speech impaired), and let the experts determine your eligibility."

February 5th is also the deadline for applying to the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for low-interest disaster loans.

Applicants who have already registered for assistance but have questions related to the status of their applications or who have other questions related to FEMA's disaster assistance programs, the toll-free phone numbers will continue to be operational Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. until further notice.

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