



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY -- FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEMA-DR-1398-MS-NR32

January 30, 2002

Contacts: **Amy Bissell, MEMA, 601-960-9039**
 (After-hours pager, 601-930-2652)

Jay Eaker, FEMA, 601-956-1844
 (After-hours pager, 800-759-8888, PIN# 1071383)

LAST MINUTE RUSH TO APPLY FOR DISASTER AID RESULTS IN MORE THAN 160 NEW APPLICATIONS

JACKSON, Miss. January 30, 2002 – With Tuesday, February 5th, being the last day for residents and business owners in the 17 Mississippi counties designated disaster areas to apply **(1-800-621-3362)** for disaster assistance, an unusually large number of applications (167) were received this past weekend, according to Gracia Szczech, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) federal coordinating officer and Mississippi State Coordinating Officer Leon Shaifer.

The 17 counties – Bolivar, Coahoma, DeSoto, Grenada, Hinds, Humphreys, Lafayette, Leake, Madison, Panola, Quitman, Scott, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica and Washington – were declared disaster areas by President Bush on December 7, 2001, following the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding **which occurred during the November 24 through December 17, time period.**

State Coordinating Officer, Leon Shaifer, said, “More than 2,100 Mississippians have applied and have been approved for some form of disaster assistance so far. Had those people not made that all-important phone call to FEMA, they would not be included in that number. More than \$7.6 million has been delivered to Mississippians as of last week. If you have storm damage resulting from the November 24 through December 17 severe weather, don't delay, call immediately. The deadline to apply is only seven days away, February 5th.”

Mississippians who sustained damage during the severe weather and who still have not applied for assistance should call the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) toll-free registration number immediately. That number again is **1-800-621-3362 (1-800-462-7585** for the hearing or speech impaired).

“Even after the deadline though, FEMA's toll-free phone line still will be available to assist those who have already registered,” added Szczech. “Those applicants who have questions about the disaster assistance programs or questions about the status of their previously filed applications should continue to use FEMA's toll-free number.”

Applications for long-term, low-interest disaster loans from the Small Business Administration must also be completed and filed by Tuesday, February 5.

###