

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

# NEWS



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**Subject: Federal Assistance Denied for Newton**

**Date: January 10, 2003**

(Jackson) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denied the Governor’s request for Public Assistance that was requested as a result of the tornado that struck Newton on December 19, 2002. The reason FEMA gave for the denial was that this disaster did not meet the State threshold.

“We plan to appeal this decision immediately,” said Governor Musgrove. “The Mississippians affected by this tornado need assistance and we are doing everything we can to make it happen.” The basis for the appeal is that the State has met the “threshold” two times in the last three months with two Presidential disasters, Tropical Storm Isidore and the Columbus tornado.

“The economic impact of the tornado in Newton was devastating,” said Robert Latham, director of MEMA. “Newton’s main business district was damaged causing a significant loss in tax revenue for the city during the busiest shopping time of the year. The loss in this tax revenue, along with the cost of recovery, places an additional financial burden on the City of Newton.”

The Public Assistance Program provides supplemental Federal disaster grant assistance for the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain Private Non-Profit (PNP) organizations. General items that are covered by the Public Assistance process are:

- Debris removal from public roads and rights-of-way as well as from private property when determined to be in the public interest
- Emergency protective measures performed to eliminate or reduce immediate threats to the public, including search and rescue, warning of hazards, and demolition of unsafe structures
- Roads, bridges and associated features, such as shoulders, ditch, culverts, lighting and signs.
- Water Control Facilities including drainage channels, pumping facilities, and the emergency repair of levees
- Publicly owned buildings including their contents and systems
- Utility Distribution Systems, such as water treatment and delivery systems; power generation facilities and distribution lines; and sewage collection and treatment facilities
- Public Parks, Recreational Facilities and Other Facilities, including playgrounds, swimming pools and cemeteries.

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