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Disaster News

WRAP-UP: DISASTER RELIEF PUTS \$12.8 MILLION TO WORK IN WASHINGTON

OLYMPIA—Disaster officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Washington Emergency Management Division (WEMD) announced today that federal/ state Individual Assistance funds committed for the recovery effort for flooding between Jan. 6 and 16, 2009, have topped the \$12.8 million mark.

As of the March 31 deadline, a total of 3,911 Washingtonians in the 15 counties declared eligible for Individual Assistance have registered for assistance, and a steady stream of grant and loan checks is going out daily.

Assistance checks to repair or rebuild after flood losses benefit area businesses as well as residents, said Federal Coordinating Officer Willie Nunn. "This aid indirectly helps local workers, contractors and businesses get back on their feet when used to purchase needed supplies and services in a hard-hit community," said Nunn.

Here are the Individual Assistance recovery program totals, as of COB, March 31:

- **\$7,165,818** in housing assistance has been granted to cover temporary rental assistance, home repairs and replacement.
- **\$839,524** in other needs assistance has been approved to cover essential personal property losses or serious disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance.
- **\$4,212,000** in low-interest disaster loans has been issued to individuals and businesses by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).
- **\$602,194** has been distributed in Disaster Unemployment benefits to individuals out of work as a direct result of the disaster and who do not otherwise qualify for unemployment benefits.
- **1,677** people visited one of the 14 Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) that were temporarily opened in various locations to help meet the needs of disaster victims.

Individuals, families and business owners in the declared counties who have registered for assistance may check on the status of their applications, update their current information, or request general assistance information by calling the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) (TTY: 1-800-462-7585).

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“Residents who have needs not covered by their insurance or disaster assistance still have resources available through the state,” says State Coordinating Officer Kurt Hardin. “They can call **2-1-1** to be connected with a comprehensive network of resources and service providers throughout the state. In addition, a list of other resources also is available online at the WDEM website: www.emd.wa.gov.”

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FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

FEMA’s temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is the federal government’s primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private nonprofit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. Homeowners, renters and business owners with questions for the SBA should call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-877-8339).